

# **A Case of Cultural Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Karaite Studies and Their Role in the Development of a Karaite Identity in the 19<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Centuries**

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## Abstract

A doctoral thesis, titled *A Case of Cultural Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Karaite Studies and Their Role in the Development of a Karaite Identity in the 19<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Centuries*

Chronologically, my study begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a time when some evidence of Karaite social activity allows us to identify the beginnings of a Karaite ‘National Movement’. However, I open the discussion with a retrospective look at the historical background and preconditions for the beginnings of the Karaite national movement after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 1783 by the Russian Empire. The study chronologically ends in 2014, when Crimean Karaites passed under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation.

In my doctoral thesis, I analyse the following main issues:

First, I examine the Karaite proto-national movement through the prism of a constructivist approach to the study of nationalism and identity. I also test the applicability of Miroslav Hroch’s model of the development of European national movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century using the Karaite proto-national movement as a case study. I compare the essential traits of several national movements in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (for instance, the Crimean Tatar, Lithuanian, Finnish and Scottish national movements) with the Karaite one.

I also use comparative analysis to focus on the characteristics of the Karaite identity in different historical periods from the 19<sup>th</sup> until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as discussed in published sources. The Karaite group travelled a long way from being a religious group to the modern ethnic group that it is today. Additionally, I dedicate a significant part of the study to scholarly discussions on the Karaite ethnic origin by non-Karaites and the Karaite reaction to such discussions precisely because outside opinions greatly impacted the construction of the Karaite identity.

I use Hroch’s model for the comparative analysis of national movements specifically with respect to the Karaite case because he paid particular attention to small-scale nationalism (and the nationalism of minority groups) in Eastern Europe. I attempt to clarify the place of the Karaite national movement in the European context with the help of this model. The Karaite movement is similar to the sort of national movements where an ethnic group has never had either its own statehood or its own ruling class (e.g., Basques). Although the Karaites have never made such demands (probably because of their small number), they can still be compared to certain national minority movements.

## Table of Contents

A Case of Cultural Nationalism in Eastern Europe: Karaite Studies and Their Role in the Development of a Karaite Identity in the 19 <sup>th</sup> –21 <sup>st</sup> Centuries.....	1
Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	7
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	8
Who are the Karaites?.....	8
Origin and Meaning of the Name.....	8
Language.....	9
Structure of the Thesis.....	9
What is new in this work?.....	11
Methodology.....	12
Sources.....	12
Literature Review.....	13
Works on Nationalism and Identity.....	13
Karaite Bibliography.....	14
Early Research.....	14
Contemporary Research.....	14
Chapter 2. Theory Frame and Earlier Research on Identity, Ethnicity, Nation, Nationalism.....	17
Identity.....	17
Ethnicity.....	18
Definitions of Ethnicity by Constructivists.....	20
Construction of Ethnicity, Ethnic Culture and Ethnic Identity.....	22
Nation and National identity.....	23
Terminology of Nation, People, Ethnicity in the Russian language.....	26
Nationalism.....	28
Cultural nationalism.....	30
Ethno-symbolism.....	32
Birth of Nationalism: Historical Background.....	34
Romanticism.....	40
Miroslav Hroch's Theory on National Revival.....	42
New Imperial History.....	47
Chapter 3. Preface. Historical Background and Preconditions for the Beginning of the Karaite 'National Movement': Early Studies on the Ethnic Origin of the Karaites by Non-Karaites.....	56
Historical Preconditions for the Karaite National Movement.....	56
Arguments presented by Abraham Firkovich.....	63
Ancient Karaite Settlements in Crimea and the Glorious Karaite Ancestors 'Granted' by Abraham Firkovich.....	64
New Interpretations of Karaite History According to Documents Found by A. Firkovich:.....	66
First Articles in the Russian Press (1843–1844).....	66
First Assumptions about the Khazar Origin of the Karaites.....	69
Karaites and Khazars in the Universal Description of Crimea (1873).....	70
Livanov's Entry on the Karaites in his Crimea Travel Guide (1874).....	72
Vasiliy Smirnov's theory about the 'Khazar-Karaite Symbiosis' (1890).....	73
Anthropometrical Research.....	75
Summary of the First Period of the Karaite National Movement in the Russian Empire from the Middle of the 19 <sup>th</sup> until the Beginning of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Centuries.....	77
Chapter 4. The Karaite Response to the Russian Scholarly Articles and Reconstruction of Karaite Ethnocultural Identity in the Russian Empire in Publications from the Middle of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century to the Beginning of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century.....	79
Historical Overview: National Policy in the Late Russian Imperial Period.....	79

What Karaites Had to Say about Their Identity and Ethnic Origin.....	81
Reformatory and De-Judification Tendencies among Karaites in the 1870s.....	81
First Seraya Szapszał Publication on the Khazar Theory (1896).....	82
Karaite Supporters of their Semitic Origin, as the Russian Scholar Shugurov Testifies....	83
Beginning of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century.....	86
The Karaite Periodical <i>Karaimskaya Zhizn</i> .....	86
Supporters of Semitic Background According to <i>Karaimskaya Zhizn</i> .....	88
Supporters of Turkic Theories in <i>Karaimskaya Zhizn</i> .....	90
National Self-Consciousness in the Pages of <i>Karaimskaya Zhizn</i> .....	91
National Romanticism in Vilnius: The Karaite Periodical <i>Karaimskoe Slovo</i> .....	94
Historical Background.....	94
<i>Karaimskoe Slovo</i> .....	97
Conclusions.....	103
Comparative Analysis of the Periodicals <i>Karaimskaya Zhizn</i> and <i>Karaimskoe Slovo</i> .....	103
General Conclusions on the First Period of the Karaite ‘National Movement’ in Eastern Europe in the Middle of the 19 <sup>th</sup> and Beginning of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century.....	105
Reasons for the Karaite National Movement.....	106
Characteristic Features and Stages of the Karaite ‘National Movement’ According to Previous Researchers.....	107
Periodisation of the Karaite Movement during the Russian Imperial Period.....	108
Chapter 5. Karaite Studies on the Pages of the Karaite Periodical <i>Myśl Karaimska</i> and Their Role in the Construction of a New Karaite Ethnic Identity in Poland and Lithuania from the 1920s to the 1960s.....	109
Introduction: Historical Background.....	109
The Society of the Lovers of Karaite History and Literature in Vilnius.....	110
Components of Karaite Ethnic Identity Traced from <i>Myśl Karaimska</i> .....	111
Religion and Tradition.....	112
Language.....	114
Karaite Positive Image as Their ‘National Saga’ and as an Element for the Construction of Their Ethnic Identity.....	116
Earlier Travellers’ Accounts of the Karaites’ Physical Appearance in <i>Myśl Karaimska</i> as an Element of Their Ethnic Identity.....	120
From Religion to Ethnicity: Conceptions of Karaite Ethnic Origin by the Karaite Scholars A. Zajączkowski and S. Szapszał.....	121
Non-Karaite Scholars on the Turkic Origin of the Karaites in the Pages of <i>Myśl Karaimska</i> .....	127
Japhetic theory.....	130
Karaite Arts as Evidence of Their Ethnic Origin.....	132
Conclusion.....	134
Chapter 6. Interlude. Karaite Studies during the Soviet Period.....	136
Chapter 7. Post-Soviet Transformations of Karaite Identity at the End of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century and Beginning of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.....	145
Introduction.....	145
Post-Soviet Karai Self-Identification.....	146
Current Views on the Ethnic Origin of the Karaites.....	152
Culture, Way of Life, Traditions and Rituals, Language and Other Attributes of Current Karaite Identity.....	154
De-Judification.....	158
Terminology and Symbols.....	160
The Role of Religion.....	163
Relation to Territory.....	167
Role of Social Media in Contemporary Karaite Self-Identification.....	169
Summary of the Period and Analysis of the Change in Karaite Self-identification in Comparison with Earlier Periods.....	171
Reasons for the Identity Transformations of the Karaites.....	172
Endnote: The Crimean Tatar National Movement.....	174

Conclusion: Differences and Similarities between the Karaite and Crimean Tatar Movements .....	179
Chapter 8. Final Discussion.....	181
Summary of the Development of Karaite Identity From the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century to the Present Day (Constructivist Approach).....	181
Construction of Karaite Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity.....	183
Comparative Analysis of National Movements with the Karaite Case According to Miroslav Hroch's Model. Cultural Form of the Karaite Nationalism According to Smith's and Hutchinson's Theories.....	187
Similar and Different Traits of the Karaite Movement and Other National Movements.....	195
Appendix A.....	199
KARAITE PERIODICALS.....	199
<i>Karaimskaya Zhizn</i> (Караимская жизнь) [Karaite Life]. Moscow, 1911–1912.....	199
<i>Karaimskoe Slovo</i> (Караимское слово) [Karaite Word]. Wilno, 1913–1914.....	200
<i>Myśl Karaimska</i> [Karaite Thought]. Wilno, 1924–1939; Wrocław, 1945–1947.....	202
<i>Karaj Awazy</i> [Karaite Voice]. Luck, 1931–1938.....	204
<i>Awazymyz</i> [Our Voice].....	205
<i>Nash Golos</i> (Наш голос) [Our Voice] 4/2008.....	206
<i>Caraimica</i> (Караимика), USA – Simferopol, Ukraine, 2007–2011.....	207
<i>Karaimskie Vesti</i> (Караимские вести, Къарай хабэрлер) [Karaite News]. Moscow, 1994–2003, 2007–present.....	208
<i>Qirim Karailar</i> (Кърым Къарайлар) [Crimean Karaites].....	209
Appendix B.....	210
BIOGRAPHIES of Scholars who Studied the Karaites.....	210
Russian Scholars.....	210
Bashmakov (Bashmakoff), Aleksandr Aleksandrovich [Башмаков, Александр Александрович] (1858–1943).....	210
Grigoriev, Vasilii Vasilievich [Григорьев, Василий Васильевич] (1816–1881).....	211
Kondaraki, Vasily Christoforovich [Кондаракис, Василий Христофорович] (1834–1886).....	212
Nadezhdin, Nikolay Ivanovich [Надеждин, Николай Иванович] (1804–1856).....	213
Smirnov, Vasilii Dmitrievich [Василий Дмитриевич Смирнов] (1846–1922).....	215
Chwolson, Daniel Abramovich [Хвольсон Даниил Абрамович] (1819–1911).....	216
Polkanov, Aleksandr Ivanovich Полканов [Александр Иванович] (1884–1971).....	218
Polyakov, Vladimir Evgenevich [Поляков, Владимир Евгеньевич] (1946, Bucharest).....	218
Jewish Scholars.....	219
Majer (Meir) Baľaban [Pseudonym: Emes] (1877–1942).....	219
Harkavy, Avraam/Albert Yakovlevich [Гаркави, Альберт Яковлевич] [Hebrew: Avraham Eliyahu ben Yaakov Harkavy] (1835/1839–1919).....	220
Weissenberg, Samuel Abramovich [Вайсенберг, Самуил Абрамович] (1867–1928).....	222
Karaite scholars.....	223
Beim, Solomon [Бейм, Соломон] (1817/1818/1819–1867).....	223
Firkovich, Abraham (Avraham) ben Samuel, [in Polish: Firkowicz, Abraham; in Hebrew: אברהם בן שמואל – <i>Avraham ben Shmuel</i> ; in Russian: Фиркович, Авраам] (1786–1874).....	224
Kazas, Ilya [Казас, Илья] (1833–1912).....	227
Kefeli, V.I. (1937, Moscow).....	227
Kobeckaitė, Galina (Halina) (20 December 1939).....	227
Lavrynovich, Mark Mikhailovich (Лавринович, Марк Михайлович) (26 December 1938–11 December 2011).....	228
Lebedeva, Emilia Isaakovna [Лебедева, Эмилия Исааковна].....	229
Levi Babovich, Tobiya Sima (Toviya Simovich) [Бабович, Товия Симович Леви] (1879–1956).....	229
Mardkovich, Aleksandr Markovich (Aleksander Mardkowicz / Kokizow) [Маркович, Александр] (1875–1944).....	230
Nowachowicz, Zachariasz (5 June 1883 – 25 March 1960).....	232

Pilecky, Shimon (b. 1925).....	233
Polkanov, Yuriy Aleksandrovich (b. 10 March 1935, Simferopol).....	233
Sarach, Mikhail Semenovich [Сарач, Михаил Семенович] (b. 1 September 1910, Moscow – d. 2000, France).....	239
Szapszał, Seraya [Karaites: <i>Haji Seraya Hachan Szapszał</i> , Russian: Шапшал, Серая (Сергей) Маркович; Polish: Szapszał, Seraj] (1873–1961).....	242
Szyszman, Shimon (Simon) Borisovich [Шишман, Симон] (1909–1993).....	243
Zajączkowski, Ananiasz / Ananjasz (1903–1970).....	246
Polish Scholars.....	248
Adamczuk, Lucjan.....	248
Czekanowski, Jan (1882–1965):.....	249
Grzegorzewski, Jan (1850–1922).....	250
Kowalski, Tadeusz (1889–1948).....	251
Morelowski, Marian (b. 1884 in Wadowice – d. 1965 in Wrocław).....	252
Talko-Hryniewicz, Julian (1850–1936).....	253
Other European Scholars.....	255
Gini, Corrado (1884–1965).....	255
Harviainen, Tapani (b. 1 February 1944, Kuopio).....	257
Israeli scholars.....	258
Kizilov, Mikhail [Кизиллов, Михаил] (b. 24 July 1974, Simferopol).....	258
Shapira, Dan (b. 1 March 1961, Moscow).....	258
REFERENCES.....	260

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

*‘Karaites continue to be a fact, not a dead historical entity’.*

(Karaimskaya Zhizn 1911 Book 1: 7)

### Who are the Karaites?

The Karaites are one of the smallest ethnic, religious, cultural and language communities in Eastern Europe. Currently, they reside between the divided territories of Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and Russia. They are a unique community, which in the past curiously combined Turkic language and culture with a Karaite variant of Judaism. Presently, their uniqueness is even more intriguing because of their changed ethno-cultural identity: they abandoned a Jewish identity and acquired a Turkic identity. There are approximately 2000 Karaites in Eastern Europe, 1,500 of whom live in Russia and Ukraine, 300-400 in Lithuania and roughly 45 to 150 in Poland (Shchegoleva 2007: 19). The Karaite population of Eastern Europe has changed considerably on a few occasions. In 1783, there were 3,800 Karaites living in the Russian Empire (with 2,600 Karaites living in Crimea). By 1897, their population had grown to 12,894 in the Russian Empire. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Karaite population in Eastern Europe dramatically decreased due to the revolution in Russia and the assimilation politics of the Soviet Union (Shchegoleva 2007: 19).

### Origin and Meaning of the Name

The Karaite name presumably derives from the Hebrew name *Miqra* in the Holy Scripture. Karaite scholar Benjamin Nahawendi was probably the first to use the name *Bene miqra* (Sons of the Holy Scripture) as an all-inclusive name for the religious group in the early Middle Ages. The Hebrew verb *qara* means ‘to read, proclaim; to be a specialist of the Scriptures’. It is derived from the noun *qara’i* (singular) and *qara’im* (plural), which translates as ‘readers of the Scripture’. The term *qara’i* passed into most Indo-European languages with the Latin suffix *-it*, Karaites, which denotes membership in a group or nationality. An exception is the more original form of the name in German, *Karäer* (Harviainen 2003: 634–635).

Eastern European Karaites refer to themselves in the Slavic languages as *Karaimy*, where *-y* is a Slavic ending and plural. Whereas *Karaim* (or *Qaraim*) is already a plural form in Hebrew. Therefore, a Slavic term *Karaims* is etymologically a double plural. In the English-speaking



scholarly tradition, the Latin form *Karaites* is common. However, some scholars on Karaite studies, for example, Tapani Harvianen, use the Slavic term *Karaims* for the Eastern European group of Karaites (in the post-Soviet regions, Poland, Lithuania) and *Karaites* for the Arabic-speaking Karaite Jews of the Middle East (Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Israel) (Harviainen 2003: 634–635).

In my thesis, I employ the traditional Latin term *Karaites* for simplicity's sake.

### **Origin of the Group**

According to one historiographical tradition, the *Karaites* originated as a religious anti-Rabbinic Jewish movement in Iraq in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Gil 2003: 73–118; Cahn 1937). They differed from Rabbinic Orthodox Judaism in their rejection of the Talmud and the tradition of the rabbis. Karaites lived solely according to the biblical authority of the Old Testament. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, or even earlier, Karaite communities appeared in Eastern Europe (primarily in the Crimean Peninsula, settling from there in the territories of what was then Poland-Lithuania, later part of the Russian Empire). They were generally well-received by the neighbouring Christians, which was quite a different case than with the Orthodox Jews (Harviainen 2003: 640).<sup>1</sup>

### **Language**

On the basis of their linguistic differences, the Karaites may be divided into two groups: (1) the Arabic-speaking Karaites of the Middle East (Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Israel) and (2) the traditionally Turkic-speaking Karaites of Eastern Europe (the post-Soviet regions, Poland and Lithuania). At the moment, there are approximately 20–30,000 Karaites in the world. Most of them originated from Egypt, but emigrated to Israel or the United States after the 1950s.

The Eastern European Karaites (*Karaimy*) traditionally spoke the Turkic vernacular, the *Karaim* (*Karaite*) language. *Karaim* belongs to the north-western Kipchak group of Turkic languages and is closely related to the Tatar language (Akhiezer & Shapira 2001: 20–21, n. 4). Eastern European Karaites are also the smallest group among the Turkic-speaking people in the world. Nowadays, the Karaites speak the language of their respective countries. Consequently, the *Karaim* language has almost become extinct. There are currently approximately 40 speakers of the language, all of whom live in Lithuania (Csató 1998: 84).

### **Structure of the Thesis**

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<sup>1</sup> On the question of the origin of *Karaims* in Eastern Europe, see Akhiezer & Shapira 2001: 19–60; Ankori 1959: 60. ft. 12; Kizilov 2008: 30–40; Sibbub ha-rab Petahya 1904–05: 4; cf. Ankori 1959: 60–64; Shapira 2002a: 24–37.

The study is composed of eight chapters and two appendices.

The first chapter is the **Introduction**.

The second chapter presents the **Theory**. It outlines a number of concepts essential to the study of the changes in Karaite ethnic identity and the Karaite National Movement. In my study, I use the term the ‘Karaite National Movement’ to mean a *proto-national movement*: the right to have a culture of one’s own and be accepted as a particular group. However, I will use the term ‘National Movement’ for the sake of simplicity. The chapter provides a theoretical framework and defines the terms central to the thesis: identity, ethnicity, nation and nationalism. It also facilitates a brief analysis of the main approaches to the study of the above-mentioned phenomenon, with particular attention to theories relevant to this study.

The third chapter is a **Preface**, which discusses the historical and political background of the Karaites as well as earlier research (secondary sources) on the ethnic origin of the Karaites in the Russian Empire. The last triggered the beginnings of a Karaite ethno-cultural identity and the Karaite ‘National Movement’. The third chapter provides a chronological timeline of the developing Karaite identity, beginning from the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 1783, the time at which the Crimean Karaites became subjects of the Russian Empire, and ending at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the Russian Revolution.

The fourth chapter — **Karaite Response** — analyses the Karaite response to the political events and the above-mentioned research into Karaite printed sources (which may not necessarily have reflected the opinions of the majority of the Karaites). This response triggered the beginning of the Karaite ‘National Movement’ and a change in their ethnic identity. The study traces the development of a Karaite identity on the basis of two main Karaite periodicals in the Russian Empire during this period: *Karaimskaya Zhizn* [Karaite Life], which was published in Moscow between 1911 and 1912, and *Karaimskoe Slovo* [Karaite Word], which was published in Vilnius between 1913 and 1914.

Chapter Five — **Karaite Studies on the Pages of *Myśl Karaimska*** — investigates how Karaite identity gradually changed in Poland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The research is based on a Polish Karaite periodical in the Polish language, *Myśl Karaimska* [Karaite Thought], which was first published in Wilno (Vilnius) between 1924 and 1939. After a break caused by World War II, it reappeared in Wrocław between 1945 and 1947.<sup>2</sup> The research shows how the ‘old building components’ of the Karaite ethnocultural identity of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gradually gained a new context and then a different significance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Chapter Six — **Interlude** — briefly outlines Soviet-era research on the Karaites, defines their status in the USSR and analyses Soviet Karaite identity in two articles on the Karaites in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, one in 1937 and another in 1953.

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<sup>2</sup> *Myśl Karaimska*. Wilno, V. I 1924–1928, V. II 1929–1939; Wrocław, New Series V. I 1945–1946, V. II 1946–1947. After 1947, it changed its name to *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* [Oriental Review] and its purpose, orienting itself toward a broader scholarly audience. It still exists by this name today (see Appendix B. and Kizilov 2007: 406).

Chapter Seven — **Post-Soviet Transformations** — shows that at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the conception of a *Turkic identity* among the Crimean and Polish-Lithuanian Karaites became firmly established among the most current Karaite leaders. The chapter analyses present-day Karaite identity on the basis of the few available Karaite periodicals, *Caraimica*, *Karaimskie Vesti* [Karaïm News] and *Nash Golos* [Our Voice], and brochures published under the supervision of the current Karaite leaders. Nowadays, Karaite leaders have become quite creative in constructing and reconstructing the Karaite historical background and identity.

Chapter Eight provides the **Final Discussion**. This part summarises the development of the Karaite identity from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the year 2014. It analyses the construction of the Karaite identity according to the theory of constructivism. It also briefly compares some the main points of the Karaite ‘National Movement’ with a few other national movements based on Miroslav Hroch’s model.

The **objectives** of the research are to analyse (1) the Eastern European Karaite ‘National Movement’ and (2) the genesis of Karaite ethno-cultural identity from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as well as (3) to compare the main characteristics of Karaite identity (religion, language, history and tradition) during different periods of time. A significant part of the first chapters of this study is also dedicated to earlier research on the ethnic origin of the Karaites because the discussion has influenced the construction of the Karaite identity to a great extent.

### **What is new in this work?**

There has been a great deal of scholarly discourse on the de-Judification and the fluctuating ethno-cultural identity of the Eastern European Karaites over the years. However, to my knowledge there have been no attempts to make (1) a systematic, impartial and detailed analysis of this phenomenon from a historical standpoint, focusing on the whole period between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and today, nor to look particularly at all the territory of the previous Russian Empire (which is now Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania). Many present-day articles that touch upon the ethnic identity of the Karaites have a subjective or non-academic and emotional character to them. This study, therefore, is an attempt to make a systematic, unbiased analysis of the changing identity of the Karaites, from its beginnings until the present. The author of this work has no personal interest in supporting any approach to the study of the ethnic origin of the Karaites, whether ‘Semitic’ or ‘Turkic’.

This study is instead an attempt to analyse Karaite identity in a broader context of theories on nationalism and (2) to compare some points of the Karaite ‘National Movement’ with other

ethnic/national movements as a means of revealing similarities between the Karaite movement and other ethnic/national movements in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The thesis has three **goals**. The *first* goal is to identify the process of change within the ethno-cultural identity of the Karaites at different time periods on the basis of the main Karaite periodical sources and scholarly articles by Karaite and non-Karaite authors (because the latter had an impact on Karaite identity). *Second*, it analyses changes in the ethno-cultural identity of Karaites according to theories on the constructivism of identity and national movements. *The third* goal is to trace similarities between the Karaite ‘National Movement’ and other ethnic/national movements in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Methodology

Methodologically, the thesis examines the Karaite ‘National Movement’ through the prism of constructivism. The thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach (historical, sociological and culturological) and comparatively analyses the characteristics of Karaite identity at different periods of time both according to the sources and with respect to other ethnic/national movements. As much as 100 years ago, the classist Ernst Bernheim (1906) recommended the comparative method as being applicable to all research that seeks to distinguish between the general and the singular in every historical process. Only through a knowledge of what is general and what is unique does it become possible to categorise every historical process and every phenomenon (Hroch 2007).

As mentioned above, the thesis will compare the Karaite ‘National Movement’ with a few other national movements in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It will analyse how the general and essential traits and connections of a few national movements (for instance, of Crimean Tatar, Lithuanian, Finnish, Scottish movements) are applicable to the case of the Karaite ‘National Movement’.

## Sources

The *primary sources* are Karaite periodicals, scholarly and amateur articles by Karaites and Karaite narratives about themselves that touch upon discussions of Karaite ethno-cultural identity from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The *secondary sources* include scholarly and amateur articles by non-Karaites that study the ethnic origin and language of the Karaites and anthropological findings on them since the Karaites used the statements of non-Karaite authors to a great extent in the reconstruction of their identity. Other secondary sources include several travellers’ reports on the Karaites, which provide information on Karaite traditions, appearance, habits and character. The Karaites used such reports to create their ‘national image’.

The articles that first began speculating on the ethnic origin of Karaites appeared in the Russian scholar journals in the year 1843 as a reaction to Abraham Firkovich's findings.<sup>3</sup> I studied the articles as a source for the beginning of the discussion on the ethnic origin and identity of Eastern European Karaites. This is because Karaites have been making reference to such scholarly discussions right up until the present day for theories on their ethnic identity.

Articles and narratives by Karaite authors on their identity can be found in Karaite periodicals between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. I used the following periodicals for my research: *Karaimskaya Zhizn* [Karaite Life], published in Moscow in 1911–1912; *Karaimskoe Slovo* [Karaite Word], published in Vilnius in 1913–1914; *Mysl Karaimska* [Karaite Thought], published in Vilnius in 1924–1939 and in Wroclaw in 1946–1947; and *Caraimica*, published in the USA and Simferopol in 2007–2011. Likewise, the thesis makes use of encyclopaedia articles in *Evreyskaya Encyclopedia* [Jewish Encyclopaedia] (1906–1913), in *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* [Great Soviet Encyclopaedia] (1937 and 1953), and in *Narodnaya Karaimskaya Entsiklopedia* [National Karaite Encyclopaedia] (1995).

## Literature Review

### Works on Nationalism and Identity

For my studies, I used the works of established authorities on the theories of nationalism, ethnicity and identity. The central framework of the study is as follows: Fredrik **Barth** *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Cultural Differences* (1969); Benedict **Anderson** *Imagined Communities* (1991); Paul R. **Brass** *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (1991); Ernest **Gellner** *Nations and Nationalism* (1983); Thomas H. **Eriksen**. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (1993); Charles F. **Keyes**. *Ethnic Change* (1982); Anthony D. **Smith** *Theories of Nationalism* (1971) and *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (1992); **Hutchinson** and Anthony D. **Smith** *Ethnicity* (1996); **Stuart** *The Question of Cultural Identity* (1991); Valery **Tishkov** *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union* (1997) and *Rekviem po Etnosu. Issledovaniya Po Sotsial'no-Kul'turnoy Antropologii* (2003); Kath **Woodward** *Identity and Difference* (1997); Miroslav **Hroch** *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (1958) and *Comparative Studies in Modern European History: Nation, Nationalism, Social Change* (2007), as well as other books and articles.

For a discussion and evaluation of the contributions to theories of nationalism and identity, see the chapter entitled *Theory*.

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<sup>3</sup> Evrei-karaimy 1844: 640–649; Evreiskie religioznye sekty 1846. Part 15: 11–49; *Otkuda prishli karaimy* Books 5–6 1911: 46–52. (Note that there is an incorrect reference in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* to Part 2 of *ZhMVD* when the author meant Part 1); Grigor'ev 1876: 423–447. See more in Chapter 4.

## Karaite Bibliography

After a long period of silence on Eastern European Karaite studies during the Soviet period, an increase in the number of publications on the topic began in the early 1990s. This was when the former Soviet archives were reopened for Western research. A comprehensive collection of publications on the Karaites was compiled in 2009 (The Karaites and Karaism 2009); the bibliography lists 8,000 publications, a rather significant number. It includes a bibliography on Eastern European Karaites as well.

## Early Research

The issue of Karaite ethno-cultural identity was not discussed directly until recently. However, it was discussed within studies on the ethnic origin, anthropology, culture and language of the Eastern European Karaites. Discussions on the origin of the Karaites started in the Russian press as a reaction to A. Firkovich's findings in the 1840s (see the paragraph *Sources* above). Much later, Zvi **Ankori** in his book *Karaites in Byzantium* (1959) provided arguably the first scholarly analysis of the so-called 'Crimean' and 'Khazarian' theories on the origin of the Karaites in Eastern Europe. The book continues to be valuable.

Anthropological studies of the Karaites began already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with works by Russian (**Ikov** 1887; **Weissenberg** 1904) and Polish (**Talko-Hryniewicz**, **Grzegorzewski** (1916–1918) scholars. The research continued in the 1930s–40s, with works by the German scholar **Reicher** (1932), the Italian **Gini** (1936) and the Polish writer **Czekanowski** (1946–1947) as part of a general interest in anthropological studies in Europe. Few studies, however, were published in Eastern Bloc countries on the Karaites at the time because of fears the topic was politically unsafe. However, the Karaim language and culture continued to be studied by scholars in Poland and the USSR on a collaborative basis (e.g. **Kowalski** 1926, 1929; **Baskakov** 1957; **Musaev** 1964).

## Contemporary Research

Scholarly research on the history of the Eastern European Karaites blossomed in the 1990s after the collapse of the USSR. Among the first monographs were Roman **Freund**'s *Karaites and Dejudaization* (1991), Nathan **Schur**'s *History of Karaites* (1992) and Philip E. **Miller**'s *Karaite Separatism in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (1993). The introduction in Miller's book on Karaite separatism is especially valuable for this study.

The edited collection *Karaite Judaism* (**Polliack** 2003) provides the first and most comprehensive collection of scholarly articles on Karaitica and it continues to be of major importance.

In the last two decades, Dan **Shapira**,<sup>4</sup> Daniel **Lasker**, Golda **Akhiezer**, Tapani **Harviainen**<sup>5</sup> and Mikhail **Kizilov**<sup>6</sup> have made significant contribution to the study of the history and identity of the Eastern European Karaites.

In recent years, Mikhail **Kizilov** has emerged as one of the most productive researchers on the history of the Eastern European Karaites. He gave a detailed analysis on the history and changing identity of the Karaites in Galicia in his doctoral thesis – *The Karaites of Galica. An Ethnoreligious Minority among the Ashkenazim, the Turks and the Slavs, 1772–1945* (Kizilov 2009). His book *Krymskaya Iudeya. Ochrki Istorii Evreev, Khazar, Karaimov i Krymchakov v Krymu s Antichnykh Vremen do Nashikh Dney. Simferopol'* (Kizilov 2011a) is an exciting comprehensive history study on the 'Crimean Judea', a region populated by Crimean Jews, Rabbanites, Karaites, Khazars, Krymchaks and Subbotniks from ancient times until the present day. Though richly illustrated and written in an easy-to-read style, it is a scholarly account based on archival sources.

Kizilov's articles 'Social Adaptation and Manipulation of Self-Identity: Karaites in Eastern Europe in Modern Times in Eastern European Karaites in the Last Generations' in the collection *Eastern European Karaites in the Last Generations* (Kizilov 2011) and 'National Inventions: The Imperial Emancipation of the Karaites from Jewishness' (Kizilov 2014: 377) are the first studies on Karaite identity in Eastern Europe. An earlier look at the issue of Karaite nationalism can only be found in Nathan **Schur**'s 'Karaite National Movement' in *The Karaite Encyclopedia* (Vienna, 1995). However, Kizilov disagreed with his claim of the existence of a 'Karaite National Movement' already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see below in this work).

In the beginning of the 2000s, Tatiana **Shchegoleva** published a few articles on the current state of the Karaite communities in Eastern Europe and their self-identification process.<sup>7</sup>

In one of her article, 'Osnovnye aspekty' (2003), she divided academic and non-academic publications on the ethno-cultural identity of Eastern European Karaites into three main categories (Shchegoleva 2003: 218–235). According to her schema, present-day Crimean Karaite authors (e.g. Yuriy **Polkanov**, Anna **Polkanova**, Mikhail **Kazas**, Vladimir **Ormeli** and Mikhail **Sarach**), who belong to the Association of the Crimean Karaites (*Krymkalaylar*), tend to present a *Turkic* theory on the origin of the Eastern European Karaites. They reject any Jewish heritage in the ethnogenesis of Karaite culture. However, many of those publications have a rather non-academic character.<sup>8</sup>

4 Shapira 2003b: 709–729; Shapira 2003d: 657–708; Shapira 2007: 303–393.

5 Harviainen 1992: 53–69; Harviainen 1998: 66–70; Harviainen 1999: 97\*–106\*; Harviainen 2003a: 634–636; Harviainen 2003b: 55–77.

6 Kizilov 2003a; Kizilov 2007a. See full list in REFERENCES at the end of this study.

7 Shchegoleva 2003: 218–235; Shchegoleva 2007: 6–16; Shchegoleva 2010.

8 See, e.g. Polkanov 1997: 149; 'Krymskie Karai': 3; 'Krymskie Karaimy-Turki': 46.

Another outlook is represented by scholars falling into the *Moderate Khazarian/Turkic* theory category. The followers of this line of thought insist on the Turkic origin of the Karaites, but they do not reject a Jewish heritage for the Karaites either. They include Professor of Semitic Languages Tapani **Harviainen** (Finland); Evpatorian *hazzan* (cantor) Victor **Tirijaki**; Yuriy **Spasskij-Boryu**, who emigrated to Israel; and Emilia **Lebedeva**.<sup>9</sup>

The last group of the scholars subscribe to theories on the *Jewish Origin and Heritage of the Karaites* and exclude a Turkic identity or any other element in the Karaite process of ethnogenesis. They are mostly researchers from Israel with a Jewish origin, such as Nathan **Schur**, Dan **Shapira** and Golda **Ahiezer**. For those scholars, the Eastern European Karaites and Karaites from Arabic-speaking countries all have a common origin (Jankowski 2004). Some Karaites support this argument, too. For example, the Karaite writer Avraham (earlier Alexey) Kefeli immigrated to Israel and also changed his mind about the idea regarding the de-Judification of the Karaites and the need to restore Judeo-Karaite values.

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<sup>9</sup> Tirijaki 2002: 3; 'Sohranenie Religioznyh' 2002: 76–83; Spasskiy-Boryu 1996.



## Chapter 2. Theory Frame and Earlier Research on Identity, Ethnicity, Nation, Nationalism

### Identity

*'Identity and culture are two basic markers of the ethnicity and the nation'.*  
(Nagel 1994: 152).

The concept of identity is central to this study. Therefore, I will begin a discussion on this topic.

The concept of identity is often used in contemporary politics and scholarship but it is hard to determine. Despite the good research base of the phenomenon of identity, its definitions are still far from explicit. Malygina sees the reasons in its interdisciplinary study (Malygina 2005).

In general,

by *identity*, we understand the values, symbols and emotions which unite a group of people and which often give the group a sense of belonging together and set them apart from other groups. (Branch 1999: 28, 30)

Kath **Woodward** pointed out that identity raises questions about how individuals fit into the community and the social world. Identity gives us an idea of who we are and how we relate to others and to the world in which we live. Identity is associated with other fundamental concepts: nationality, race, ethnicity, regional, and local (Woodward 1997: 301).

Identity is about difference as well as about shared belonging (Woodward 1997: 301). By difference, scholars mean that identities are frequently constructed in terms of oppositions such as the following: black/white, man/woman (Woodward 1997: 1), Karaite/Jew. Therefore, identities are strongly oppositional, and often constructed on an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy (Woodward 1997: 29). Identity is also *relational*. For instance, to be a Serb is to be 'not a Croat' (Woodward 1997: 9);<sup>10</sup> to be a Karaite is to be 'not a Jew'.

There are at least two perspectives in defining identity, *essentialist and non-essentialist* (Woodward 1997: 11). An *essentialist* definition of, for example, 'Karaite' identity, would suggest that there is one clear, an authentic set of characteristics, which all Karaites share and which do not alter across time. However, such a phenomenon does not exist in reality. We will see that this perspective on identity cannot be applied to the construction of the Karaite identity because I could

<sup>10</sup> Woodward also points out that identities are not unified. There may be contradictions within them which should be negotiated. There may be mismatches between the collective and the individual level, such as those that can arise between the collective demand of Serbian national identity and the individual day-to-day experience of shared culture (Woodward 1997: 12).

not find any such characteristics, which have not altered across time. A *non-essentialist* definition focuses on differences, as well as common characteristics, for example, both between Karaites and between Karaites and other ethnic groups. It also pays attention to the definition of what it means to be Karaite and how it has changed throughout time. A non-essentialist approach recognises '*what we have become*' in a cultural sense. Cultural identity, in this sense, is not fixed. It is not remaining unchanged in the frames of history and culture (Woodward 1997: 53). Identities have their histories – and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. Identity is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Hence, there is always politics of identity, which have no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin' (Woodward 1997: 53).

This study is based on a non-essentialist approach to identity, according to which collective identities are fluid and constantly reconstructed over time (See, e.g., Tilly 1988; Nagel 1994).

## Ethnicity

Ethnicity is another central concept of this study. It is a very difficult task for researchers to define the concept of ethnicity. Sergey **Cheshko** (1994: 35–36) considers that all existing theories are unable to detect an exact character of ethnicity, because of the irrational character of ethnicity. He reckons that ethnicity as a phenomenon exists, however, science, which operates by the rational methodology of cognition (that is how it differs from, e.g., religion and arts), is limited in research of irrational categories. That is why a notion of ethnicity is impossible to define with only one exact definition at least at the present stage of scientific development (Cheshko 1994: 39–40).

There are three main approaches to the study of ethnicity:

- Primordial (essentialist),
- Instrumentalist
- Constructivist

*Primordialism* underlines that ethnic membership is acquired through birth and thus represents a given characteristic of the social world. Individual connections such as religion, blood, race, language, and a custom attribute to primordiality (Wimmer, Andreas 2008: 970–971). Today, primordialism has been discarded in the West. However, primordialism continues to be studied in post-Soviet social sciences. As a Russian scholar, Valery **Tishkov** criticised, post-Soviet scholars, with few exceptions, have remained strongly attached to a primordial vision of ethnicity (Tishkov 1997: 1–3). This can be probably explained by the fact that Soviet scholars were isolated from Western influences.

In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, scholars around the world have begun to focus more attention on ethnicity as a means – *an instrument* – employed by a collectivity in its efforts to gain material or political advantages in the social arena (Tishkov 1997: 12). Instrumentalists treat

ethnicity as a social, political, and cultural resource for different interest and status groups (Hutchinson & Smith 1996). This *instrumentalism* approach sees a collectivity claim to ethnicity and to ethnic status as being based on academic and political myths that are created, propagated, and often manipulated by elites seeking recognition and power (Tishkov 1997: 12). One of the central ideas of instrumentalists is the socially constructed nature of ethnicity and the ability of individuals to 'cut and mix' from a variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to forge their own individual or group identities (Hall 1992 as cited in Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 9).

*Constructivists* see ethnicity as a part of the repertoire that is calculated and chosen consciously by an individual or a group in order to satisfy certain interests and to achieve certain goals. *Constructivism* posits a process of identity formation in which cultural elites play a significant, but *not necessarily a manipulative role* as claimed by the instrumentalists (Tishkov 1997: 12). According to the constructivist approach, the ethnic sentiment is created through historical differences in the following: culture, myths, conceptions, and doctrines that are formed within its context. Hence ethnicity is seen as an intellectual and social construct. The results are viewed as the purposeful efforts of elites who are professional producers of subjective visions of the social world. These professionals include writers, scholars, and politicians, whose intellectual production became transmittable on a mass level with the spread of the printed word of education.<sup>11</sup> The constructivist approach pays special attention to *mentalities* and *language* as key symbols around which a perception of ethnic distinctiveness constructs. For example, written texts and speeches contain historical reconstructions which are used to justify the authenticity and the continuity of one or another ethnic identity (Tishkov 1997: 12). The pioneer of what later became known as *constructivism*, Frederic **Barth**, claimed that ethnicity is the product of a social process (vs. the primordial view) rather than a cultural given, made and remade rather than taken for granted, chosen due to circumstances rather than ascribed through birth (Wimmer 2008: 970-971).<sup>12</sup>

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11 The very idea of nation and so-called national awareness (or self-awareness), the intellectual product of Western elites, thus spread around the world simultaneously with the process of modernisation (Gellner 1983 and Hobsbawm 1990 as cited in Tishkov 1997: 12). In the 2nd half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the idea found support in Eastern Europe and Russia, especially among leaders of the peripheral ethnic groups of the former multiethnic Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires with a central administration. (Tishkov 1997: 12).

12 Some authors call Frederic Barth's approach *the comparative study of ethnicity* (Barth 1969). Barth broke away from the primordial (or Herderian) canon in anthropology, according to which each ethnic group represented 'a historically grown, uniquely shaped flower in the garden of human cultures' (Herder 1876 as cited in Wimmer 2008: 970-971). Instead of studying each of these cultures in a separate ethnography, Barth and his collaborators observed how the *boundaries* between two ethnic groups are maintained. Even though their cultures might be indistinguishable and even though individuals and groups might switch from one side of the boundary to the other (Wimmer 2008: 970-971).

To sum up, in the following two decades after Barth's (constructivist) theory, prolonged battles emerged between devotees of this constructivist perspective and adherents to older views that were more in line with Herderian notions of the binding power of ethnicity and culture. This debate has often been framed in dichotomous terms: '*primordialism*', which underlined that ethnic membership was acquired through birth and thus represented a 'given' characteristic of the social world, was pitted against '*instrumentalism*', which maintained that individuals choose between various identities according to self-interest. '*Essentialism*' was opposed to '*situationism*', the former privileging the transcontextual stability provided by ethnic cultures while the latter showed how individuals identify with different ethnic categories depending on logic of the situation. '*Modernists*', attributed the salience of ethnicity to the rise of the modern nation-state, while '*perennialists*' insisted that ethnicity represented one of the most stable principles of social organisation in human history. Scholars who insisted on the subjectively felt reality and deeply rooted character of ethnic 'identity'

## Definitions of Ethnicity by Constructivists

**Wimmer** (2006), referring to previous authors (Weber 1922/1978: 385-98; Eriksen 2010 and others) defines ethnicity as

*a subjectively felt sense of belonging* based on the belief in shared culture and common ancestry. This belief refers to cultural practices perceived as 'typical' for the community, to myths of a common historical origin, or to phenotypical similarities. (My italics) (Wimmer 2008: 973)

**Williams** (2001) emphasises that ethnicity is a collective cultural distinctiveness:

The term [ethnicity] has been used variously to signify 'nation', 'race', 'religion', or 'people', but the central generic meaning is that of *collective cultural distinctiveness*. (my italics) (Williams 2001: 4806–4810)

Joane **Nagel** writes that

Ethnicity is best understood as a dynamic, constantly evolving property of both individual identity and group organisation. Ethnicity is the product of action undertaken by ethnic groups as they shape and reshape their self-definition and culture; however, ethnicity is also constructed by external social, economic, and political processes and actors as the shape and reshape ethnic categories and definitions. (Nagel 1994: 152)

Anthony **Smith** stresses the *historical* and *symbolic-cultural* attributes of ethnic identity. He writes that ethnic group is a type of cultural collectivity, one that emphasises the role of myths of descent and historical memories, and that is recognised by one or more cultural differences like religion, customs, language or institutions (Smith 1991: 20). He also distinguishes between *ethnic categories* and *ethnic communities*. Anthony Smith explains that *ethnic categories* are human populations whom at least outsiders consider to constitute a separate cultural and historical grouping. But the populations so designated may at the time have little self-awareness, only a dim consciousness that they form a separate collectivity (Smith 1991: 20-21).

An *ethnic community*, on the other hand, he writes, can be distinguished by six main attributes:

1. a collective proper name
2. a myth of common ancestry
3. shared historical memories
4. one or more differentiating elements of common culture
5. an association with a specific 'homeland'
6. a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population (Smith 1991: 20-21).

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argued against those for whom ethnic distinctions were primarily driven by the changing 'interests of individual or collective actors' (Wimmer 2008: 971.). After all, by the end of the 1990s, constructivism had gained over essentialism, instrumentalism over primordialism, and circumstantialism over perennialism. Routine references to the 'constructed', 'changing', and 'power-driven' character of ethnicity that one finds in today's literature illustrate the contemporary hegemony of constructivism. Primordialism, essentialism, and perennialism have, however, survived in unacknowledged form in some ethnic studies departments and in migration studies (Wimmer 2007: 972) as well as in conflict research (Brubaker 2004 as cited in Wimmer 2008: 972).

Smith argues that the more a given population possesses or shares these attributes, the more closely does it approximate the ideal type of an ethnic community or *ethnie*. Where these attributes are present, a community of historical culture with a sense of common identity is present. He points out that such a community must be sharply differentiated from a *race* in the sense of a social group that possesses unique hereditary biological traits that allegedly determine the mental attributes of the group. In practice, *ethnies* are often confused with races, not only in this social sense but even in the physical, anthropological sense (Smith 1991: 21).

Anthony Smith emphasises that the above list of ethnic attributes reveals not only their largely cultural and historical content, but also (with the exception of number 4) their strongly subjective components. Most important, it is myth of common ancestry, not any fact of ancestry (which is usually difficult to ascertain), that are crucial. He argues that it is fictive descent and putative ancestry that matters for the sense of ethnic identification (Smith 1991: 22).

Smith explained that what he has termed 'shared historical memories' may also take the form of myth. Indeed, for many pre-modern peoples the line between myth and history was often blurred or even non-existent (Smith 1991: 22). Similarly, attachments to specific territory, and to certain places within them, have a mythical and subjective character. It is the attachments and associations, rather than residence in or possession of the land that matters for ethnic identification. It is where we belong. It is often a sacred land, the land of our forefathers, our kings and sages, which makes this our homeland. Besides, the sacred centres of the homeland inspire the members of the *ethnie* from afar, even when long divorced from its homeland, through an intense nostalgia and spiritual attachment (Smith 1991: 22-23).

Smith states that it is only when we come to the varying elements of a common culture that differentiate one population from another that more objective attributes enter the picture. Language, religion, customs and pigmentation are often taken to describe objective 'cultural markers' (Smith 1991: 23).

He also argues that as the subjective significance of each of these attributes waxes and wanes for the members of a community, so does the cohesion and self-awareness of that community's membership. As these several attributes come together and become more intense and salient, so does the sense of ethnic identity and, with it, of ethnic community. Conversely, as each of these attributes is attenuated and declines, so does the overall sense of ethnicity (Smith 1991: 23).

Of the many differing definitions of ethnicity, the psychiatrists seem to prefer the subjective experience of ethnicity as part of the self-definition of a person. They note that each individual has shared the perception of the distinctiveness of his ethnic group, and a sense of common historical experience. Added to this sentiment is the continuity through biological descent and the sharing of common social and cultural conditions. At the heart is the feeling of being special (Snyder 1990: 94).

We can see from the definitions above that the most modern constructivist authors consider *emotional* components and *belief in common ancestry* to be main points in defining ethnicity.

Constructivists believe that ethnicity may grow and weaken under the influence of the environment (Koksharov 2002). John **Hutchinson** and Anthony D. **Smith** write that the movement from ethnic groups to a community is a transition that some groups never make, that others make initially in modern times, and that others undergo repeatedly at various points in time. In the first category, there are the countless ‘lost’ peoples and speakers of diverse dialects who have merged into or are merging into other peoples. In the second category are the newly formed ethnic groups and nations of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 87).

### **Construction of Ethnicity, Ethnic Culture and Ethnic Identity**

*Culture and history are the substance of ethnicity.* They are also the basic materials used to construct ethnic meaning. Hence, culture is closely associated with the concept of meaning. Culture dictates the appropriate and inappropriate content of a particular ethnicity. It also describes the following: language, religion, belief system, art, music, dress, and tradition (Nagel 1994: 161). The notion of culture is closely related to the concept of identity. Culture is a construct of social identity. Identities are produced, consumed and regulated within culture – creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation about the identity positions, which we might adopt (Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 87).

Joane **Nagel** has proposed a modernised version of a classical Barth’s ‘vessel’ imagery (Barth 1969: 14), *the shopping cart* as a useful device for examining the construction of ethnic culture. She suggests that we think of ethnic boundary construction as determining the *shape* of the shopping cart (size, number of wheels, composition, etc.); ethnic culture then, is composed of the things we put into the cart – art, music, dress, religion, norms, beliefs, symbols, myths, and customs. It is important that we discard the notion that culture is simply a historical legacy; culture is not a shopping cart that comes to us already loaded with a set of historical cultural goods. Rather we construct culture by picking choosing items from the shelves of the past and the present (Keesing 1974: 86; see also Goodenough 1971 as cited in Keesing 1974: 86). In other words, cultures (as well as identities) change; they are borrowed, blended, rediscovered, and reinterpreted (Nagel 1994: 161).<sup>13</sup> Culture is constructed in a way that is similar to the way that ethnic boundaries are built, by the actions of individuals and groups and their interactions with the larger society. Culture provides the content and meaning of ethnicity; it animates and authenticates ethnic boundaries by providing a history, ideology, symbolic universe, and system of meaning. Culture

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<sup>13</sup> Nagel’s use of the shopping cart metaphor extends Swidler’s (1986) cultural toolkit imagery. Swidler argues that we use the cultural tools in the toolkit, but that we also determine its contents – keeping some tools already in the kit, discarding others, adding new ones (Swidler 1986 as cited in Nagel 1994: 161).

answers the question: *What are we?* It is through the construction of culture that ethnic groups fill Barth's vessel or Nagel's shopping cart – by reinventing the past and inventing the present (Nagel 1994: 161).

Nagel writes that **ethnic identity** is most closely associated with the issue of *boundaries*. Ethnic boundaries determine identity options, membership composition and size, and form of ethnic organisation. Boundaries answer the question: *Who are we?* In other words, ethnic boundaries determine who is a member and who is not. Boundaries also designate which *ethnic categories* are available for individual identification at a particular time and place. Debates over the placement of ethnic boundaries of ethnic groups are central mechanisms on ethnic construction (Nagel 1994: 154). Nagel reminds that while ethnicity was commonly viewed as biological, research has shown people's conception of themselves along ethnic lines, especially their ethnic identity, to be situational and changeable (Waters 1990: Chapter Two). According to this perspective, *one's ethnic identity is a composite of the view one has of oneself as well as the views held by others about one's ethnic identity*. As the individual (or group) moves through daily life, ethnicity can change according to variations in the situations and audiences encountered.<sup>14</sup> Ethnic identity, then, Nagel asserted, is the result of a process involving internal and external opinions and processes, as well as the individual's self-identification and outsiders' ethnic designations – namely, what *you* think your identity is, versus what *they* think your ethnicity is. Since ethnicity changes based on the situation, the individual carries a portfolio of ethnic identities that are more or less salient in various situations. As audiences change, the socially defined array of ethnic choices open to the individual changes. This produces a 'layering' of ethnic identities, which combines, with the ascriptive character of ethnicity to reveal the negotiated, problematic nature of ethnic identity (McBeth 1989). Outside agents and organisations construct by both the individual and group as well as ethnic boundaries, and thus identities (Nagel 1994: 154–155). Nagel maintains that ethnic identity is *both* optional and mandatory, as individual choices are circumscribed by the ethnic categories available at a particular time and place. That is, while an individual can choose from a set of ethnic identities, that set is generally limited to socially and politically defined ethnic categories with varying degrees of stigma or advantage attached to them. In some cases, the array of available ethnicities can be quite restricted and constraining (Nagel 1994: 156). Particularly when compulsory ethnic categories are imposed by others. Such limits on ethnic identification can be official or unofficial. In either case, externally enforced ethnic boundaries can be powerful determinants of both the content and the meaning of particular ethnicities (Nagel 1994: 156).

### **Nation and National identity**

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14 Barth (1969) first convincingly articulated the notion of ethnicity as mutable, arguing that ethnicity is the product of social ascriptions, a kind of labelling process engaged in by oneself and others (as cited in Nagel 1994: 154).

The definitions of nation and nationalism vary. As John A. **Hall** stated ‘no single, universal theory of nationalism is possible. As the historical record is diverse so too must be our concepts’ (as cited in Periwal 1995: 8). **Narochnitskaya** makes a good point stating

numerous approaches in studies of nations and nationalism should not be necessarily regarded as optional – everyone is only an aspect of a common phenomenon, although in artificially split by research analysis prospect. (Narochnitskaya 1997) (my translation)

One of the main scholars of constructivism, Benedict **Anderson** (1983), considers the nation as being an ‘imagined political community’:

It is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson 2006: 5–6)

However, according to Andersson, the fact the communities are imagined does not make them unreal.

On the contrary, **Eriksen** wrote that ‘ethnic group’ has come to mean something like ‘people’ (Eriksen 1993: 10):

Ethnic groups, as well as nations, tend to have legends of common origin and they nearly always have ideologies encouraging endogamy, which may nevertheless be of highly varying practical importance. (Eriksen 1993: 10)

Some authors (e.g. Weber 1922/1978) reckon that a *desire to establish a state differs nations from other kinds of communities*. John **Hutchinson** and Anthony D. **Smith** wrote that

A nation may be seen as a particular type of ethnic community or, rather, as an ethnic community politicised, with recognised group rights in the political system. (Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 86)

**Lurie** defines a nation as a sort of culture, which formed under the influence of nationalism (Lurie 1999: 108). Miroslav **Hroch** considers the nation as a constituent of the social reality of historical origin. On the contrary to Andersson and Gellner (‘Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations when they do not exist’ (Gellner 1964: 169), Hroch considers the origin of the modern nation as the fundamental reality and nationalism as a phenomenon derived from the existence of that nation. However, nation is not an everlasting category, standing outside concrete social relations (Hroch 1985: 4-5.) According to Hroch,

The formation of the modern nation was a process in which the establishment of objective relations between people was reflected in a growth of their awareness of national identity. [...] The mere combination of appropriate types of relationship cannot in itself create a modern nation, if there is no corresponding alteration in the sphere of consciousness, at least among some of the people, in the shape of a strengthening of national awareness. (Hroch 1985: 7–11)

But what distinguished a cultural community from a nation? For **Bauer** the crucial factor was sentiment, a sense of the community's own shared destiny. For this reason Bauer spoke of nations as ‘communities of fate’ (Schicksalsgemeinschaft). He revamped Hegelian phrase about



peoples 'with' and 'without history' in order to underline the crucial role played by the memory of past historical struggles of wars, or formerly independent states, like Poland or Bohemia, whose memory could be invoked to arouse nationalist sentiment in the present (Periwal 1995: 10).

We may argue about the **timing** of *when nations appeared* (see Smith 1971), whether in the modern era (*a modernist perspective*) or before that (*an ethno-symbolist or perennialist perspective*), but the fact remains that they exist (Fox 2015). Anderson noticed 'the objective modernity of nations to the historian's eyes vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists':

... once one starts thinking about nationality in terms of continuity, few things seem as deep historically rooted as languages for which, no dated origins can ever be given. (Anderson 2006: 196)

He also noticed another paradox of nationalism: the formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept – in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality as he or she 'has' a gender (Anderson 2006: 6).

Ernest **Gellner**, who has realised the modernity of nationalism most fully, related it to industrial society which depends upon a common culture (Periwal 1995: 10).

Most scholars agree with Gellner on modernity of nationalism (see Armstrong, Smith and Hall in Periwal 1995: 10, 45). John A. Hall makes a point that though there have always, of course, been distinctive cultures, and particular upper classes have had some sense of shared ethnic solidarity. But the power of the nationalist idea – that people should share a culture and be ruled only by someone co-cultural with themselves – seems to him historically novel' (Periwal 1995: 10).

John **Armstrong**, though admits that it now appears that the notion of **national identity** as a primordial phenomenon has been generally discarded by scholars (as cited in Periwal 1995: 35). He argues that few are prepared to reject the proposition that national identity (like other social constructs) originated at a specific point, however, remote, in history. He agrees that nationalism – the conscious demand for political expression of the nation – originated, on the other hand, no earlier than the 15<sup>th</sup> century. As suggested previously, Greenfeld stipulates its emergence in 16<sup>th</sup>-century England, whereas impressive French works continue to assert a slightly prior emergence of French nationalism. Nonetheless, the notion that nations, or even 'ethnic groups', have existed forever is scarcely tenable among scholars (as cited in Periwal 1995: 35).

Armstrong points to the significance of *ethno-religious identity* (Periwal 1995: 36). His position has been that there is a *fundamental continuity between identities of diaspora groups* (as religions of the millet type) *and their modern expression as political nationalisms*. He reminds that every historian recognises that such expression (for example, in Theodore Herzl's Zionism and the Armenian Hunchak party) emerged only during the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century (as cited Periwal 1995: 36). As Hugh Seton-Watson wrote:

The influence of Judaism on the life of Israelis, and on the formation of Israeli national consciousness, can certainly not be explained in terms of party manoeuvrers, or limited to

professed believers... the religious heritage thus directly reinforces national consciousness. (Seton-Watson 1977: 403)

Armstrong argues that in the light of very recent events, it would be hard to argue that such continuity of religion and national identity, even in its political expression as nationalism, is limited to diasporas (as cited in Periwal 1995: 36). But, he emphasises, the contention here is not that ethno-religious nations are the norm, but that *religious divisions remain one significant basis for identity* (as cited in Periwal 1995: 37). He argues that one reason some scholars have rejected the concept of a 'persistent ethnoreligious syndrome' has been insistence on language as the prime indicator of nationalist cleavage (as cited in Periwal 1995: 38). Such insistence implies the corollary that (since a single standardised linguistic code is a recent development even in 'old' nations like France) nationalism cannot pre-date the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century. He speculates, if, on the other hand, we accept arguments that nationalism originated either in France or England by the 16<sup>th</sup>-century, language as an indicator cannot have been decisive. Certainly, he continues, *elite nationalist spokesmen have endeavoured to demonstrate the importance of language differences, regardless of the real influence of linguistic differences at the mass level*. Intensive efforts by politicians, journalists, literary figures, philologists, folklorists and historians led (during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) to the emergence of a group of East Slav dialects as 'Ukrainian', of certain South Slav dialects as 'Macedonian', and of 'Slovak' as a major West Slav language (as cited in Periwal 1995: 38). Armstrong regards that emphasis on language derives in part from two aspects of nationalism: one is the **Romantic movement** that endowed most nationalist ideologies with an aversion to rationalised programmes and imbued adherents with self-sacrifice, 'heroism' and emphasis on will-power (see more on Romanticism below in this chapter) (Periwal 1995: 39).

To summarise, modern authors consider that the most important component of a nation is a subconsciousness *belief* in the group's particular origin (similar to ethnicity). However, not all scholars base the concept of the nation on the concept of ethnicity. To make the difference *between ethnicity and nation* in this study, we will accept the view of few scholars on the *nation* as the following: *nations are politicised ethnic groups, owning or intending to own a territory or a state*.

### **Terminology of Nation, People, Ethnicity in the Russian language**

In Russian language sources, the term *natsia* (nation, people, nationality) was commonly used to define the Karaite people at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, I will explain, what *natsia* meant in the Russian language during this period. According to a scholar of nationalism, Aleksey **Miller** (2012), the idea of *natsia* first appeared in the Russian language in Peter I's period (1682-1725), but kept a status of a newly borrowed word until the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the beginning, *natsia* has had various meanings. It has been mainly understood as meaning

state, or the population of its subjects, mainly nobility. On the other hand, another recognised meaning was *ethnicity* (Miller 2012).

Miller pointed out that at the same time there was a notion of *narodnost*', which started to be used in the 1820s (Miller 2012). A Russian poet, historian and statesman, Pyotr Vyazemskiy, presumably invented the term *narodnost*' in 1819. He wrote to Alexander I. Turgenev<sup>15</sup>:

Why not to translate [a French *Nationalite*] as *narodnost*'? Indeed, Poles: say *narodowość*... It is much better than to take alien words... (*Perepiska knyazya* 1899: 357–358) (my translation)

The term *narodnost*' was popular between 1830–1860s. It was used along with *narod*, another option for the translation of *Nationalite* from French into the Russian language (Miller 2012).

In Russia during the Nikolay I period (1825–1855), the usage of the term *natsia* was blocked by censorship, because of its association with the French constitution and liberalism (Miller 2012).

In terms of ethnic and racial consolidation, the use of *natsia* appeared in the 1860s and gained momentum by the 1880s.<sup>16</sup> Compared to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, political and constitutional issues were inseparably linked with the notion of *natsia* (Miller 2012).

On the contrary, *narodnost*' nearly disappeared in the 1880s. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *narodnost*' often meant *an ethnic group* (Miller 2012). As we find in *Bol'shaya Entsiklopedia*: human collectives 'gradually develop from *narodnost*' (ethnos, people) to *natsional'nost*' (ethnicity) and from *natsiona'nost*' to *natsia* (nation, people) (Yuzakov 1903: 715).

Nevertheless, *narodnost*', which Gradovskiy defined in 1873, became a basis for the definition of *natsia* in many dictionaries and encyclopedias (Miller 2012). Gradovskiy about *narodnost*':

a population of persons, connected by a common origin, language, civilisation and historical past, which has a right to form a special political unit. (Gradovskiy 1873: 10) (my translation)

Compare to:

*Natsia* is defined as a population of persons who share the following: common origin, language, religion, way of life, disposition, traditions and historical past. (Seslavin 1902: 246) (my translation)

Compare also *natsia* is

A population of individuals who share the following: awareness of unity, common origin, language, faith, a way of life, disposition, traditions, historical past and solidarity of social and political interests. (Brokgauz & Efron 1909: 693–694) (my translation)

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a connection between *natsia* and race was so strong that *Encyclopedicheskiy slovar* 'Granat' (1916: 69) referred to articles 'Race and Assimilation' ('Rasa i Assimilyatsia') instead of giving a separate article on *natsia*, an extensive article on 'National Question' was given ('Natsional'nyy vopros') (Miller 2012).

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15 A.I. Turgenev (1784–1846): historian and statesman.

16 In 1886 an essay *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* by Ernest Renan in Russian translation (*Chto takoe natsia?*) was issued, where racial conception of nation and a topic of mental connection occupied a central place.

According to the Karaite periodical *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, Karaites employed terms *narod* (people) and *natsia* (nation) at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In later periods, they used a term *narod* (*people*). In Polish language, they used a term *narodowość* (see next chapters of this study).

## Nationalism

The concept of **nationalism** is closely related to the notion of nations. Nationalism has a broad connotation that can be interpreted either positively and negatively. Nationalism can be associated with ‘chauvinism’, ‘ethnic egocentrism’, ‘national liberation movement’, ‘ethnic extremism’. Nationalism with a positive connotation is associated with the following: national consciousness, national pride, national values and national liberty. Nationalism with the positive content is identical to patriotism and stimulates further development (Koksharov 2002). In my study, I will examine the positive connotation of nationalism.

There are various usages of the term ‘nationalism’, as

1 doctrines or ideologies

2 movements,

3 sentiments,

4 precesses of ‘nation-building’, to which later we could add

5 symbols and languages (of nationalism) (see Smith 1998: 187).

Hroch wrote that unlike the term ‘nation,’ which is documented in most European languages in the period before the actual beginning of the formation of modern nations, ‘nationalism’ emerged as a new concept in the political discourse, which loaded it from the beginning with evaluative political connotations, usually negative. Not till the period between the two world wars did it begin to be used – actually only in the United States – as an instrument of scholarly historical analysis. Particularly after the Second World War, when the term became common, the tension between the concept ‘nationalism,’ with its negative connotations, and the organically originating term, ‘nation,’ with its positive connotations, became fully apparent (Hroch 2007a: 11).

Hroch pointed out that confusion is increased by the fact that ‘nationalism’ is in various languages interpreted in connection with how ‘**nation**’ is understood in any particular language. If, in English, ‘the nation’ is very close to ‘the state,’ then ‘nationalism’ is also understood mainly as efforts aiming one way or another towards statehood. If in German ‘die Nation’ is defined chiefly by culture and language, the term ‘Nationalismus’ found itself in an inherently contradictory position, because it can mean precisely this exaggerated emphasis on the linguistic and cultural designation of nationality, as politically defined opposition to this sort of conception of nation. Added to this is the conscious or subconscious linking of nationalism with negative expressions of national consciousness and struggles ‘in the name of the nation’ (Hroch 2007a: 12). Some authors

have tried to forestall this confusion by differentiating between various kinds of nationalism. Thus, for example, in the period between the two world wars Carlton J. H. Hayes (1882–1964) differentiated between six types of nationalism (including Liberal, Jacobin, and integral). Hans Kohn (1891–1971), writing later, was satisfied with two: progressive ‘Western’ nationalism derived from the ideals of the French Revolution, which he called the counterpart to the reactionary nationalism of the ‘non-Western’ (that is, German) kind, which was focused on language, culture, and consanguinity. Similarly, Liah Greenfeld discusses positive nationalism (English and American) and negative (German and Russian) (Hroch 2007a: 12).

It seems under these circumstances that it is inappropriate to project the term ‘nationalism,’ which is anyway nebulous and has various connotations, to the past and talk about the ‘nationalists’ of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries or even the Middle Ages, Hroch concludes. Hroch regards that if the term can be applied to all activities oriented to the existence of the nation, it seems more appropriate to employ the term ‘national consciousness’ or ‘national identity’ for this wide range of activities. Moreover, the terms ‘identity’ and ‘collective identity’ have the advantage of enabling one to work with combinations of several group identities (the nation, country, region, state, town, and so forth) and with the transformative nature of relations between these identities within some hierarchy (Hroch 2007a: 12).

Hroch points to another difficulties with ‘nationalism’. Increasingly in current research the view is promoted that the nations in general and the small nations in Central and Eastern Europe in particular were ‘constructed’ solely (or chiefly) as the creation of intellectuals trying to attain positions of power, dispel frustration, or work out the subjective problems of an identity crisis. In other words, the *nation is presented as the product of nationalism*. From this point of view, the authors of the ‘Romantic’ texts presented in this volume may appear as the ‘creators’ or ‘inventors’ of the modern Czech, Bulgarian, Serbian, and other nations (Hroch 2007a: 13).

Students of nationalism (e.g., Smith, Tyshkov) differentiate few types of nationalism: *civic* (or state), *ethnic* (or cultural) and *linguistic* (Smith 1971: 217-218; Tishkov 1997; Stearns 1997).

The first is established on a notion of a nation as a political group (Tishkov 1997; Stearns 1997).<sup>17</sup> This category of nationalism is the most frequently identical with patriotism, but can also turn into chauvinism, aggression or isolation (Tishkov 1997; Stearns 1997).

The second category considers nationalism as an *ethnocultural category*, as a community, which has historical roots, socio-psychological or even genetic nature (Tishkov 1997; Stearns 1997). Louis **Snyder** suggests the term *ethnonationalism*, because ethnicity and nationalism share a common history. Birth, lineage and kinship are featured prominently in ethnicity and in nationalism. The word *ethnonationalism* is useful when referring to psychological processes common to

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<sup>17</sup> In this regard, as I mentioned above, some scholars tend to regard nation as a type of politicised ethnicity, owning or intending to own a territory or a state and determine nation very closely to ethnicity. Eriksen sees the relationship between ethnicity and nationality as complex:

The distinguishing mark of nationalism is its relationship to the state. When the political leader of an ethnic movement makes demands to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore becomes a nationalist movement. Although, nationalisms tend to be ethnic in character, this is not necessarily the case (Eriksen 1993: 6).

ethnicity and nationalism. Historian Hans Kohn maintained that nationalism is primarily a psychological fact (Snyder 1990: 94). Smith believes that 'ethnic nationalisms' starts from a pre-existent homogeneous entity, a recognisable cultural unit; all that is necessary is to protect and nurture it. The primary concern, therefore, of 'ethnic nationalists' is to ensure the survival of the group's *cultural* identity (Smith 1971: 217-218). In the context of ethnonationalism (or ethnic nationalism), nationalism forms a nation on a basis of a particular culture. In this respect, i.e. in a cultural context, *nationalism is a very diverse as well as cultures forming it* (Koksharov 2002).

Some scholars offer other types of nationalism as well. For instance, political scientist Max Sylvius **Handman** proposed a conception of *prestige nationalism*. This form of nationalism emphasises the glorious history of a people's past and demands greater respect for its beliefs (Snyder 1990: 240-241). Smith also distinguishes three levels of nationalism: a state of social consciousness; ideological system; social and political practice (Smith 1971: 217-218).

Hew **Selton-Watson** concluded that there are no scientific notions of nationalism. In ambiguity of nationalism is its power (Koksharov 2002).

### **Cultural nationalism**

I will pay a special attention to cultural nationalism as I consider Karaite form of nationalism to be cultural.

Anthony D. Smith makes difference between cultural and political nationalism (Smith 1998: 177). He does not agree with Susan Reynolds, for whom the conjunction of regnum and 'people' meant that medieval 'regalism' was always both political and cultural in content. In Smith's view, this statement refutes the common idea that modern nationalism is simply the later politicisation of cultural or ethnic sentiments in pre-modern periods, and that the distinctive feature of modern nations is their sovereignty as mass political communities. Smith points that the Middle Ages were full of loose but politically independent communities or 'peoples', each with its own ruler. He also refutes the separation of a purely cultural from an exclusively political type of national sentiment. In the Middle Ages and perhaps also in antiquity, he states, no such distinction was made (Mendels 1992: ch. 1; Grosby 1991; but cf. Hall 1992 as cited in Smith 1998: 177).

In the modern world, however, in Smith's view, such a separation is much more feasible. John Breuilly confined nationalism to a purely political movement; and Eric Hobsbawm argued that nationalism's only interest for the historian lay in its political aspirations, and especially its capacity for state-making (Breuilly 1993: Introduction; Hobsbawm 1990: Introduction). Smith argues that such a usage is unduly restrictive. It omits other important dimensions of 'nationalism' such as culture, identity and 'the homeland', and pays little attention to the character of the object of nationalist strivings, the 'nation'. The result, in Smith view, is a serious underestimation of the

scope and power of nationalism, and of its ethnic root (Smith 1998: 177). John Hutchinson also thinks that we cannot overlook the recurrent significance of cultural forms of nationalism; despite their smaller scale and often transient character, we must accord due weight to 'a cultural nationalism that seeks a moral regeneration of the community' (Hutchinson 1994: 41). Smith wrote that we often find the two kinds of nationalism alternating in strength and influence; as political nationalism falters and ebbs, cultural nationalists, as it were, 'pick up the torch and seek to rejuvenate a frustrated and oppressed community (Smith 1998: 177).

Hutchinson makes a following definition of difference between cultural and political nationalism:

a civic polity of educated citizens united by common laws and mores like the polis of classical antiquity.

Their objectives are essentially modernist: to secure a representative state for their community so that it might participate as an equal in the developing cosmopolitan rationalist civilisation.

By contrast, the cultural nationalist perceive the state as an accidental, for the essence of a nation is its distinctive civilisation, which is the product of its unique history, culture and geographical profile. (Hutchinson 1987: 12-13)

Hutchinson emphasises the importance of historians in cultural nationalism who rediscover the national past and chart its destiny, and of artists who celebrate the heroes of the nation and create out of the collective experience of the people. So the small circles of cultural nationalists form clubs and societies, read poetry, edit journals and engage in rituals, and seek to promote national progress through communal self-help. If popularised by educators and journalists, cultural nationalism can spawn a

loose network of language societies, dramatic groups, publishing houses, lending libraries, summers schools, agricultural cooperatives and political parties. (Hutchinson 1987: 12-13)

Hutchinson writes that under the influence of Herder, this kind of nationalism took root especially in Eastern Europe, for example among Czechs and Ukrainians of the mid- late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It could be found both among populations that existed only as ethnic categories, without much self-consciousness, such as Slovaks, Slovenes and Ukrainians, who had few ethnic memories, distinctive institutions or native elites; and among well defined nations with definite borders, a self-aware population and rich memories, like Croatians, Czechs, Hungarians and Poles (Hutchinson 1987: 17-18; 21-22).

Hutchinson draws three conclusions from his analysis of the dynamics of cultural nationalism. The first is 'the importance of historical memory in the formation of nations'. The second is 'that there are usually competing definitions of the nation', and their competition is resolved by trial and error during interaction with other communities. And the third is 'the centrality of cultural symbols to group creation', which are only significant because 'of their power to convey an attachment to a specific historical identity' (Hutchinson 1987: 29-30).

Hutchinson states that this does not mean that cultural nationalism is a regressive force. It may look back to a presumed glorious past, but it repudiates both traditionalism and modernism. Instead cultural nationalists should be seen

as moral innovators who seek by 'reviving' an ethnic historicist vision of the nation to redirect traditionalists and modernists away from conflict and unite them in the task of constructing an integrated distinctive and autonomous community, capable of competing in the modern world (Hutchinson 1987: 34).

He writes that such movements are recurrent. They continually re-emerge in times of crisis even in advanced industrial societies, because they answer to 'a deep-seated conflict between the worlds of religion and science'. However, 'continuing hold of the historical religions suggests that there is no final resolution to this conflict (sc. between religion and science)' (Hutchinson 1987: 40). It is better, therefore, to see 'cultural and political nationalism as competing responses – communitarian and state-oriented – to this problem (Hutchinson 1987: 40-41).

Eric Hobsbawm wrote that the crucial phase of nationalism came in the period 1870-1914, when the mass civic-democratic political type was transformed into an ethnic-linguistic type of nationalism. He states that efflorescence of ethno-linguistic nationalisms was the product of a number of factors: the conflation of 'race', language and nationality during this period; the rise of new classes and the resistance of old classes to modernity; and the unprecedented migrations of peoples in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – all this in the context of the democratisation of politics and the massive new powers of centralised states (Hobsbawm 1990: 109-10). He regards that these latter-day ethno-linguistic nationalisms are the successors, or even heirs, of the Eastern European small-nationality movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hobsbawm 1990: 164).

### **Ethno-symbolism**

Anthony Smith writes that in terms of ideologies, the specific concepts and movements of nationalism could be securely dated to the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, even if there were earlier religious nationalisms in England and Holland. But in terms of national structures, sentiments and symbolism, it could be traced earlier, Smith argues. He states that it was possible to trace examples of all three back to at least the late medieval period in a number of European nations from England and France to Poland and Russia. So he states, there was evidence of *some measure of national continuity*. But more important, he writes, it was possible to find examples of social formation in pre-modern periods, even in antiquity, that for some decades or even centuries approximated to a definition of the concept of the 'nation', notably among the ancient Jews and Armenians, but also to some extent to Egyptians, and perhaps the medieval Japanese and Koreans. In other words, Smith argues, the concept of the 'nation' was perennial, insofar as recurrent instances of this formation could be found



in various periods of history and in different continents. Here, Smith speaks of *national recurrence* (Smith 1998: 190).

Smith also points to *ethnic continuity* and *ethnic recurrence*. He states that throughout history and in several continents, there was considerable evidence, not just of 'objective' cultural (linguistic, religious, etc.) differences and categories, but of 'subjective' ethnic identities and ethnic communities. Smith points to Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Persians, Chinese and Japanese as to examples of ethnic continuity, since, despite massive cultural changes over the centuries, certain key identifying components – name, language, customs, religious community and territorial associations – were broadly maintained and reproduced for millennia. In other cases, he writes, such as the peoples of Ethiopia, Fertile Crescent, northern India and Balkans, ethnicity has been more of a recurrent phenomenon. These regions have seen a succession of often well defined and well documented ethnic communities, with different groups forming, flourishing and being dissolved, usually through conquest, absorption or fragmentation (Smith 1998: 191). Thus, he argues that specific nations are the product of older, often pre-modern ethnic ties and ethno-histories. Not all, of course, he assures. For example, there are 'nations-in-the-making' (Tanzania, Eritrea, Libya) that are relatively recent and do not appear to be rooted in a longer ethnic past (Smith 1998: 195).

This Smith's concept of ties of pre-modern ethnicities with modern nations conflicts with Gellner's modernist insistence on the impossibility of nations in pre-modern periods. Smith pays a particular attention on the analysis of the role of myths, memories, values, traditions and symbols in the formation of nations. Smith argues that *symbols* – emblems, hymns, festivals, habitats, customs, linguistic codes, sacred places and the like – were powerful differentiators and reminders of the unique culture and fate of the ethnic community. So were shared memories of key events and epochs in the history of the community: memories of liberation, migration, the golden age, of victories and defeats, of heroes and saints and sages (Smith 1998: 191). Thus, Smith defined ethnic communities (ethnies) as

named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity. (Smith 1986: 32).

Smith argues that in the ancient and medieval worlds, ethnicity played a much larger role than modernists, who rejected the conflation of earlier collective cultural identities with modern nations and nationalisms, were willing to concede. These were ethnic minorities, diaspora communities, frontier *ethnies*, ethnic amphictyonies and even ethnic states, states dominated by particular ethnic communities such as an ancient Egypt or early medieval Japan (Smith 1998: 191). Smith states that the problem of ethnic survival seemed particularly important for later nationalisms: the ability to call on a rich and well documented 'ethno-history' was to prove a major cultural resource for nationalists, and myths of origins, ethnic election and sacred territories, as well as memories of heroes and golden ages, were crucial to the formulation of a many-stranded ethno-

history. Smith argues that all this points to the importance of social memory. He gives an example of the relationship between modern and ancient Greeks that shows,

*ethnies* are constituted, not by lines of physical descent, but by the sense of continuity, shared memory and collective destiny, i.e. by lines of cultural affinity embodied in myths, memories, symbols and values retained by a given cultural unit of population. (Smith 1998: 192; 1991: 29)

Smith distances his 'historical ethno-symbolic' type of analysis from any version of primordialism. The first is the sense of cultural affinities, rather than physical kinship ties, embodied in a myth of descent, shared historical memories and ethnic symbolism, that defines the structure of ethnic communities; and the same is true for any nations created on the basis of cultural affinity (Smith 1998: 192). Smith came to see clusters of myth, symbols, memories, values and traditions, emerging from the shared experiences of several generations of cohabiting populations, as the defining cultural elements from which ethnic groups emerged. On the other hand, Smith writes, their crystallisation as self-aware *communities*, as opposed to other defined ethnic *categories*, was the product of external factors such as folk cultures resulting from shared work and residence patterns; group mobilisation in periodic inter-state warfare producing memories and myths of defeat and victory; and especially the impact of organised religions with scriptures, sacred languages and communal priesthoods. However, on the whole, ethnicity in pre-modern periods was not normally the basis of alternative polity formation, except where it combined with religion (Smith 1986: 32-41).

As John Armstrong points out, this was to alter significantly in the modern world. Here the modernists make an important point. It was the revolutionary nature of the economic, administrative and cultural transformations of the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup>-century Europe that brought culture and ethnic identity to the fore as a basis for polity formation (Smith 1998: 192).

Smith concludes that the nation, then, as concept and ideal formation is historically embedded (Smith 1998: 195). However, as Smith states, *ethnies* are not exactly what modern nation are, it is exactly those features of nations that *ethnies* lack – a clearly delimited territory or 'homeland', a public culture, economic unity and legal rights and duties for everyone – that make nations ultimately quite different from *ethnies*, despite the fact that both possess such features as an identifying name, myths of common origins and shared historical memories (Smith A. D. 1998: 196). Some scholars (e.g. Armstrong) may use the terminology of 'nation' for pre-modern *ethnies*, but he clearly differentiates modern nations from these earlier ethnic identities. Smith and Hutchinson reserve the term 'nation' for the modern period and they clearly separate off a modern nationalism from pre-modern ethnic sentiment (Smith 1998: 196).

### **Birth of Nationalism: Historical Background**

Norman **Rich** mentioned among reasons, which provoked nationalism, the profound social and economic changes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This caused population movements and urbanisation and thus the breakdown of traditional, local and social ties. Membership in a national community was made particularly attractive by the concept of community. Nationalist provided historical evidence to support the belief in national uniqueness and superiority. This belief was an act of faith, and nationalism accordingly took on the character of a religion. Nationalism in this perspective, not only met the need to belong, but also the need to believe in something greater than self, in this case in a mystical national mission (Norman 1977: 22). Among other main prerequisites of nationalism, Rich pointed to industrialisation and emphasis on materialism and realism. He also noted the impact of scientific thought and a sharp decline in religious faith; generally accessible education and thence a possibility of a common indoctrination of national consciousness by state governments. Another possibility for indoctrination was a wide development of print-capitalism in vernaculars (Norman 1977: 22). Timothy **Snyder** included among reasons for nationalism development: the disruption of the medieval Church and the formation of national churches, the advent of vernacular literatures, the rise of national armies, the emergence of the middle class, and the revolutionary growth of capitalism. The middle class, the bourgeoisie, began to feel that the nation belonged to the owners of property, not to the king. The national sentiment reflected this new conception. Monarchs also regarded the emerging nationalism as a means of perpetuating their dynasties. The language factor was also important. Latin began to be replaced by vernacular tongues. The close connection between nations and language was retained throughout its development (Snyder, T. 2003: 242).<sup>18</sup> Johann Gottfried von **Herder** (1744-1830) declared in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, that: ‘Denn jedes Volk ist Volk; es hat *seine* National Bildung wie seine Sprache’ (as cited in Kemiläinen 1964: 42). This Eng-European concept of nation-ness as linked to a private property language had wide influence in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe and, more narrowly, on subsequent theorising about the nature

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<sup>18</sup> Benedict Anderson discussed the last point as a main reason for nationalism rise. He considers that antecedents of nationalism were its cultural roots (or rather national languages) and print capitalism. With print capitalism appeared generally accessible books in vernacular languages, which superseded sacred languages (which handled only a limited group of people) of world religious communities: Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Judaic (Anderson 2006: 12-36, 44).

Besides, B. Anderson considered that liberalism and the Enlightenment also disrupted imperial and *ancient regimes*. However, he was convinced that neither economic interest, nor Liberalism, nor Enlightenment could, or did, create an imagined community. In his view, pilgrim creole functionaries and provincial creole print-men played the decisive historic role (Anderson 2006: 65). Print-language is what invents nationalism, not a particular language per se (Anderson 2006: 133-134).

Anderson concluded that printed languages laid the basis for national consciousness in three different ways. *First*, they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above spoken vernaculars. ‘Speakers of huge varieties of Frenches, Englishes... who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, become capable in comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they became aware of hundreds of thousands of people in their particular language-field, and at the same time that only those thousands so belonged. These fellow-readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed the embryo of the secular, ‘nationally imagined community’.

*Second*, Anderson considered that print capitalism gave a new security to language, which is in the long run helped to build that image of antiquity so central to the subjective idea of the nation.

*Third*, Anderson concluded that the convergence of capitalism and print technology created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which set the stage for the modern nation (Anderson 2006: 65).

of nationalism (Anderson 2006: 68). **Smith**, in contrast to Gellner and Anderson, does not believe that nations and nationalism appeared because of industrialisation and media. He links groups of the past with modern nations. He anticipates that every nation has group historical and cultural memories as well as folklore. Smith sees roots of nationalism as stability and the endeavour of people for glory and respect (Smith 1971).

Ernest **Gellner**, whose contribution to the study of nationalism has been fundamental, considered nationalism to be a product of industrialisation and modern social order. At the basis of his theory is the insistence that an industrial society depends upon a common culture. This probably depends upon sharing a language, and certainly upon sharing an extended cultural code. Culture defines a person's place in a constantly changing world. Nationalism is also, in his opinion, a result of social movements (Gellner 1964: 169; Periwal 1995: 10). According to John A. **Hall**, one reason why Gellner's theory is not a truly universal one is that it fails to explain the very first emergence of nationalism in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Britain and France. Hall states that the nature of the failure is obvious: nationalist sentiments are clearly in place before the emergence of industry (as cited in Periwal 1995: 12).

Gellner distinguished few stages of nationalism in Europe. The first, of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was, in his view, relatively humane and liberal. The nationalists were in alliance with the liberals against the non-ethnic hierarchical ancient régime, and the Herderian form of nationalism opposed universalism, and claimed a shared place in the sun for local, distinctive culture (as cited in Periwal 1995: 4).

Then, Gellner writes, the human, liberal nationalism was replaced by the virulent, aggressive form which reached its height during the interwar period (as cited in Periwal 1995: 6). The gentle communalism of the Herderian type was transformed by the impact of Darwinism: the imagined community became not merely cultural, but also biological, genetic (as cited in Periwal 1995: 6). Then was a period of populist romantic nationalism. The Habsburg Empire collapsed at a time when the virulent, aggressive version of populist romantic nationalism was at its height (as cited in Periwal 1995: 6). Many scholars (e.g., Gellner, Hall) agree that nationalism flourishes as the result of the collapse of empires (Periwal 1995: 6, 9).

Michel **Mann** argues that nations and nationalism have primarily developed in response to the development of the modern state (as cited in Periwal 1995: 44). He wrote that before the full emergence of nations and nationalism, there were two '*proto-national*' phases in Europe: *the religious and the commercial/statist phases*. He speculated that the expansion of literacy was key to both, since this provided the necessary infrastructure through which culture might be more broadly shared (as cited in Periwal 1995: 44). In the religious phase, beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Protestantism and the Counter-Reformation expanded literacy across the spread of each vernacular language and downward across middling classes. A single written vernacular spread out from the 'home counties' at the expense of other dialects and languages, increasing a sense of shared cultural

community. The Protestant Reformation involved a degree of popular religious mobilisation against ruling classes and church hierarchies (as cited in Periwal 1995: 45).

Mann also pointed out that interaction networks expanded as agriculture commercialised; local religious practices became more shared across the classes; customs, marriage patterns and cultural practices stabilised. Local-regional mobilisation across the classes became more technically possible (as cited in Periwal 1995: 46). By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the local-regional community often seemed to mobilise entire 'ways of life'. Thus, Mann states, it might seem strong, deeply rooted, honoured by time, a seemingly 'ethnic' identity (Periwal 1995: 46).

Unlike Gellner and Marxists scholars, Mann argued that only a small part of the answer can be found in capitalism. He agreed that the emergence of industrial capitalism expanded the interaction networks and the literacy of civil society, enabling identities to stabilise over larger social spaces. However, he maintained that the nation is not so intimately related to capitalism or industrialism as is often argued. He believes that the key lies rather in the state (as cited in Periwal 1995: 47). He points out that pre-18<sup>th</sup>-century states had done little beside fighting and preparing for wars. Only where entwined with Churches did they penetrate much of social life. Yet under the pressure of the Military Revolution (from the 16<sup>th</sup> century), reinforced by persistent 18<sup>th</sup>-century wars, their military activities began to significantly affect social life – the *military phase* began. From being fairly insignificant, he explains, states now loomed over the lives of their subjects, taxing and conscripting them attempting to mobilise their enthusiasm for its goals (Periwal 1995: 47, 48). As state extraction increased, it became more regressive – since the dominant classes were the money-lenders and could better resist increased taxes, Mann argued. Thus subjects became aroused out of their historic political indifference into anger and violence against naked exploitation. They petitioned, demonstrated, rioted and sometimes rebelled in their demand for political citizenship for 'the people' and 'the nation'. The peasantry, the working class, minorities – and eventually women – joined people and nation (as cited in Periwal 1995: 47, 48). Self-conscious nations emerged from the struggle for representative government, initially born of the pressures of state militarism (as cited in Periwal 1995: 47, 48).

Mann regards that nationalism of militarist phase produced state-reinforcing, state-subverting as well as, temporary, state-creating nations (as cited in Periwal 1995: 46, 47, 48). He regards that Britain (apart from Ireland) and France were examples of state-reinforcement, since the linguistic community was securely located in the state's territorial and class core, and since the emerging political nation was virtually coterminous with state boundaries. But Empires like the Austrian, the Ottoman and the Russian were essentially confederal, blending many languages, religions and provinces most with autonomous political histories and organisation (as cited in Periwal 1995: 46, 47, 48, 49). Fiscal and conscription pressures here produced very different outcomes. Thus reformers within the Habsburg domains sought less to transform the central state than to strengthen regional political autonomies against the central state. The drive here was

towards what we would call federalism. 'Patriotism' became associated more with the single province than with the whole empire (as cited in Periwal 1995: 49).

Thus, Mann argued that the emergence and triumph of the state-subverting nations were not directly caused by the development of capitalism or industrialism (as Marxists and Gellner, 1983 argue). His explanation centres rather on the **political economy of the state**: its growing fiscal and manpower costs, and its office-holding benefits. He regards that Hroch (1985) gives the most careful account of nationalism in terms of economies and classes (Periwal 1995: 49). Mann pointed that linguistic issues increasingly arose: what should be the language of the public sphere, especially of government, and what languages should be taught in schools? (Periwal 1995: 52). Yet, he argued, linguistic nationalism was not just an instrumental demand. As clerics and philologists standardised local vernaculars, these became the cement of public as well as private interaction networks, reproduced in elementary schools, churches and market exchanges. Language gradually became coterminous with the sense of a regional cross class ethnicity. Politics concerned identities as well as interests, deepening the emotions they could mobilise (as cited in Periwal 1995: 53).

Miroslav **Hroch** regards that the emergence of national agitation was interconnected with *modernisation*. Thus, providing feelings of social, intellectual, political and moral crisis. These changes stimulated a need for new group solidarity and identity. Therefore, producing dissatisfaction among educated members of the non-dominant ethnic group (Hroch 2007: V, 83). Another explanation that he emphasised was the influence of *romanticism*. However, he stipulated that this relationship cannot be interpreted simply as being the one-sided impact of romanticism; it was instead a coexistence based on a common root. Both romanticism and the search for a new national identity tried to respond to the great crisis of legitimacy and social change. This provoked the dissolution of the old feudal society, with its stable and transparent ties. The upholder of these new values – the nation – had to be defined by stable and unchangeable features. *Language* came to be of unique importance, as a stable and easy way of defining such ties (Hroch 2007: V, 86). The new concept of the nation as a personalised body emerged and was soon transformed into a basic conception, whereby the ethnic group was internally defined as 'us'. The life of this personality-nation and its dissimilarity and differentiation from other nations, logically depended on the successful spread of the national language; if that failed, the personality-nation would 'die' (Hroch 2007: V, 86). Hroch evaluates conditions in which the decision in favour of a new national identity was taken. This always occurred during a crisis of the old regime, and at a time when the old relations and ties were disrupted and opened to doubt. The ruling elites – or more specifically some of their members – reacted to this crisis of the old regime with efforts at reform from above. The immediate outcome of these reforms was, of course, a further disruption of the existing relations and certainties, and hence also of identity (Hroch 2007: V, 98). I will examine the Karaites circumstance through the above concept of Hroch. In the beginning, the weakening of old

certainities and the old system of values was only perceived by those who possessed a certain breadth of outlook and education; they concluded that it was necessary to search for new certainties and to create a new system of values which would correspond to the modern age. For some, the solution was to look for new certainties in a new type of identity: by identifying with a group of equal citizens bound together by a common culture, destiny, social position, language and so forth (Hroch 2007: V, 98–99). Hroch concluded that nation-forming must be explained and understood in the context of the great social and cultural transformation that ushered in the modern age. He cannot accept the view that nations are a mere ‘myth’ (Hroch 2007: V, 103).

Hroch identifies three keys to creating a nation: a ‘*memory of a common past*’, treated as a ‘destiny’ of the group; a density of *linguistic or cultural ties* enabling a higher degree of social communication within the group or beyond it; a conception of the *equality of all members* of the group organised as a civil society. These three keys to creating a national identity generally occur in Phase A of Hroch’s three phases (Hroch 1985: 22-25; Periwal 1995: 66).

Hroch also wrote that the nation-forming processes usually had their own linguistic and ethnic component, whether a vernacular, which sought the road to codification, or the rationalistic linguistic unification of state territory. Linguistic homogenisation was anyway a process that ran in parallel with the formation of modern nations, where both processes often penetrated each other and also clashed. Here, as well, we must differentiate between two levels: the level of objectively existing linguistic ties and markers of ethnicity, and the level of the subjective perception of language, the glorification of language. The cult of folk customs and folk art, which is usually linked with Romanticism, was often strikingly employed here (Hroch 2007a: 13).

Hroch emphasised that the formation of nations proceeded roughly in parallel with the processes of modernisation, which, however, cannot be reduced to industrialisation, as Gellner would have it. The changes brought on by modernisation, therefore, include increasing social mobility and migration, as well as the introduction of rational administration, universal education, and the expansion of communications. Without a certain level of education among the public, without a certain level of social communication, any national propaganda was doomed to failure. Here lies the boundary that even the most enthusiastic Romantic could not break through (Hroch 2007a: 13).

Another point that Hroch put forward is that national agitation, the national idea, could only be comprehensible to the masses and acceptable to them if it corresponded to some extent with their everyday experience: in that case, it was the experience of conflict, in particular, which most stimulated each social movement. In short, the generally recognised factors of national mobilisation include the existence of nationally relevant conflicts of interest. By those he mean the kinds of conflicts where the groups clashing are differentiated not only by their interests but also by their language, ethnicity, or nationality. It could be, say, a conflict between a peasant whose mother tongue was Estonian (or Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Slovenian) and a German or Polish-speaking

landowner, or a conflict between ethnically different groups of officials over posts in the civil service. Ultimately, the struggle for political power among the politicians of various nationalities was also of this nature (Hroch 2007a: 14-15).

## Romanticism

Many scholars (e.g., Gellner, Hroch and others) relate nationalism to romanticism. I will pay here a special attention to Romanticism in Europe as it influenced the Karaite movement. I will discuss National Romanticism, particularly in the Russian Empire, in Chapter 4.

Romanticism<sup>19</sup> – artistic, cultural and intellectual movement of the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> – first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was characterised by emphasis on emotion, individualism and glorification of the past (medieval rather than classical antiquity), nature and folklore. It arised as a reaction to modernity (Enlightenment, industrial revolution) and rationalism.<sup>20</sup> For example, in literature, popular national epic works appeared: the Finnish *Kalevala*, Estonian *Kalevipoeg*, Polish *Pan Tadeusz* and Latvian *Lāčplēsis* – they remain popular until today. National romanticism varied from a focus on the development of national languages and folklore, as well as interest in local customs and traditions, to the political movements that would redraw the map of Europe and lead to calls for ‘self-determination’ of nationalities. Nationalism was one of the key issues in Romanticism, determining its roles, expressions and meanings (Snyder 1990: 346).

Hroch writes that events in Europe on the frontier of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, industrialisation, along with the ideas of the Enlightenment, caused crisis of old moral and social norms and a new ‘way of life’ appeared. In arts and culture, Romanticism appeared to replace Classicism, in philosophy – rationalism. Romantic approaches to life was a reaction to a feeling of loneliness among philosophers and other educated, which stemed from a sense of insecurity, from the disrupted harmony of the ‘old’ world. And, above all, a new group identity was announced, which elevated the nation as the supreme value and fundamental ‘centrum securitatis’ (Hroch 2007a: 4, 5).

Hroch states that in the search for a stability of relationships Romantics turned to the past: from the gloomy reality of the present to an idealised picture of past, of which the *Middle Ages* enjoyed the greatest popularity (as a counterweight to the Antiquity so beloved of Classicism) where certain virtue of knights were so different from the complicated people of the present (Hroch 2007a: 6). He argues that the search for security could *strengthen the group identity*, which either

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19 ‘Usually, by ‘Romantic approach’ one understands a strong emphasis on emotion, the subjectification of attitudes, an attempt to be unconventional, the absence of a realistic approach to the world, and so forth. There is, however, no generally accepted definition of Romanticism, and when we do come across a consensus about it among experts, it tends to be in the negative definition: Romanticism is labelled a reaction to Enlightenment rationalism and cool, restrained Classicism’ (Hroch 2007a: 5).

20 Hroch wrote:

‘Few crucial events in Europe in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries: French Revolution, invention of steam engine and other technical achievements which started industrial revolution opened new roads for the future development of European society. The Napoleonic wars integrated Russia into the political and cultural history of Europe’ (Hroch 2007a: 4).



already existed or had been rediscovered, by searching for a common fate, shared heroism, or the suffering of the national community in the distant or recent past. It was in this historical context that the relationship to the community, 'the nation,' moved to the fore (Hroch 2007a: 6).

He emphasises that the feeling of being uprooted, search for new stability and criticism of the world that was based on selfishness and the exploitation or oppression of others, and hence a desire for a new, better world, led the Romantics to the *common people*, and the myth of the 'Golden Age', a time when people were still sincere, selfless, and unspoiled by civilisation. More often, however, it was a search for the ideal of the *common people in the present day* – among the simple country-folk (and therefore in folk art too) on the one hand, and among the natives of distant lands on the other; it was in this context that the popular construct of the 'noble savage' was born. This context also includes, however, the idealisation of the common man, usually a peasant or countryman, as the vehicle of elementary, universally human, national values (Hroch 2007a: 6; Periwal 1995: 34). From the perspective of Western Europe and North America, Romantic emphasis on the peasantry has rapidly become old-fashioned, even in Eastern Europe. However, the continued strength of nationalism in a highly urbanised countries like Weimar Germany suggests how adaptable the ideology of nationalism can be (Periwal 1995: 39-40). Consideration of the role of peasants in nationalist constructs implies a significant role for economic factors and class divisions in explanations of modern nationalism (Periwal 1995: 40).

Hroch states that for our context the most important search for a way out of the crisis of values and identity was the *search for a new community* in which the individual who was freed from the bonds of corporate society and stripped of a sense of security could put down roots, a community with which he or she could identify, – the nation. The term 'nation' was itself already part of the vocabulary of the educated at the time (as a designation of inhabitants of a state and as a designation of an ethnic community), but it now acquired a value connotation and emotional charge (Hroch 2007a: 7).

Hroch answers the question what was national about Romanticism? At the time of its creation the national movement, national consciousness, had much in common with Romanticism. *The turn to national identity also grew out of the crisis of identity*, which was brought about by changes at the dawn of the modern era: the loss of religious legitimacy and also therefore the loss of axiomatically formulated principles, the weakening of the old traditional feudal and patriarchal bonds, and, from that, the loss of security (Hroch 2007a: 7).

Hroch argues that Romanticism in relation to the nation can neither be limited to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century nor located in the second, propaganda phase of the national movement (see below on Hroch's phases schema). He noted that we encounter Romantic approaches not only in the phase of national agitation, but also, much later, in the third phase of the national movement, which is distinguished by the modern nation already being fully established and national identity achieving mass acceptance. The cult of language, the Romantic idealisation of the past, and the cult of the common people were stereotypes that accompanied the national movement also to the time when it was fully formed and national existence was assured – not infrequently in the form of the nation-state (Hroch 2007a: 11).

## Miroslav Hroch's Theory on National Revival

According to Hroch's study, national movements in Eastern Europe had a firm organisational structure that extended over the entire territory. Hroch concluded three fundamental phases (**A-B-C schema**) of the national movements (Hroch 1985). He noted that every national revival begins with a passionate concern within the part of a group, usually intellectuals (manifestations of scholarly interest). This generally involves the study of the language, traditional culture, or the history of its own nationality. At the first phase (**Phase A**) the revival remained without any widespread social influence. During this initial period, activists devoted themselves to scholarly inquiry into the linguistic, historical and cultural attributes of their ethnic group. But in all cases they were far from having any political goals (Hroch 1985: 22-25; Periwal 1995: 67). The second phase (**Phase B**) was the period of patriotic/national agitation, whereas a new range of activists emerged, who now began to agitate for their compatriots to join the project of creating a full-fledged nation.<sup>21</sup> *Linguistic and cultural demands* dominated during Phase B, usually followed by political demands<sup>22</sup> but not before the transition to the mass movement in Phase C was achieved. This was the case for the majority of national movements (Hroch 1985: 22-25; Periwal 1995: 68). The final phase (**Phase C**), which led to the rise of the national unit, was where a majority of the population responded to the patriotic call and formed a mass movement. In the concluding phase of development, national consciousness had become the concern of the masses. The full social structure of the nation would usually come into being, and political differentiation begins to emerge

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21 Hroch wrote that the basic condition for the success of any agitation (not only national agitation) is that its argument at least roughly corresponds to reality as perceived by those to whom it is directed. National agitation therefore had to (and normally did) begin with the fact that, quite independently of the will of the 'patriots', certain relations and ties had developed over the centuries which united those people towards whom the agitation was directed. They formed a community united by inward ties, and they were at least vaguely aware of this. There was a further psychological condition: the ability of the targets of national agitation to conceive of the existence of 'their' group outside the framework of their everyday experience. This conception in turn depended on the degree of education and the personal experience of individuals. These were not circumstances which the agitators could themselves create or influence; they were results of the process of modernisation. Along with these conditions for successful agitation, four further factors must be mentioned and tested on the Karaite case (see Final Discussion of the dissertation). The *first* was the successful course of Phase A: successful in so far as it clearly distinguished the nation-to-be from its neighbours, codified the language, provided basic information about the 'national' past, and so forth. The *second* was a basic level of vertical social mobility: some educated people must come from the non-dominant ethnic group without being assimilated. The *third* necessary condition was an increasing level of social communication, including literacy, schooling and market relations. *Forth* (did not happen in the Karaite case) was 'nationally relevant conflict of interests', i.e. social or professional tension or collision, conflict between new university graduates and a closed elite, tension between countryside and towns. (Hroch 2007: VII, 99-100).

22 Hroch distinguishes three groups of demands, corresponding to the three main aspects of national existence:

1. The development or improvement of national culture based on a local language which had to be used in education, administration and economic life.
2. The creation of a complete social structure, including their 'own' educated elites and entrepreneurial classes
3. The achievement of equal civil rights and of some degree of political self-administration.

The relative priority and timing of each of these sets of demands varied and we can use them as suitable criteria for a typological differentiation of national movements. It was at this level that the demand for self-determination emerged. Hroch stressed that the demand for self-determination, for full independence, emerged at a very late stage in most European national movements (Periwal 1995: 67).

(Hroch 1985: 22-25; Hroch 2007: V, 67). The transition from one stage to the other did not take place immediately. Between the manifestations of scholarly interest and the mass diffusion of patriotic attitudes, there was a period which was significant for the actual formation of the small nation. This period was characterised by active patriotic agitation: the fermentation-process of national consciousness. Phase B not necessarily destined to pass over into Phase C, etc. (Hroch 1985: 22-25).

However, in Hroch's opinion, the origin of the modern nation and the birth of the national movement cannot be explained primarily through patriotic agitation. Identical forms of agitation, identical patriotic manifestations, led to very different results among the different nationalities, and nowhere were they sufficient by themselves to bring the national movement successfully into its mass phase (Hroch 1985: 178).

Hroch reckons that people living in the towns were on the average more rapidly drawn into the ranks of the patriots than people living in the countryside. The same can be said of the younger in comparison with the older generation. The 'young people' in question could either be students or young members of the intelligentsia, who were seeking to make their mark in society for the first time (Hroch 1985: 180).

National agitation attained success most rapidly in regions where the communication system was on a relatively higher level. The national movement attained success more rapidly among that section of the oppressed nationality, which was socially more mobile and possessed of stronger communications links. Hence the spread of the national movements during the second phase (Phase B) went hand in hand with the advance of social communication and mobility (Hroch 1985: 183).

Hroch stresses one crucial typological difference: 'Western' national movements were characterised by having started Phase B under the conditions of a constitutional regime as well as under the conditions of a civil society, while the comparable Phase B of 'Eastern' national movements proceeded within the context of late-absolutist feudal regimes in the Habsburg empire, the Ottoman empire, Tsarist Russia, Prussia and Denmark (as cited in Periwal 1995: 68).

He considers that in Central and Eastern Europe with its political basis and platform being in most cases a multi-ethnic empire – the Russian, Habsburg, or Ottoman – inhabited by many non-ruling ethnic groups, a different type of national movement was dominant. He argued that development towards a modern nation in this area assumed the form of a national movement, that is a struggle to achieve the attributes considered necessary for national existence.

Lacking not only statehood, but also a complete social structure and a tradition of their own culture in their own national language, the national movement of the non-ruling ethnic groups in the multi-ethnic empires pursued the aims of cultural and social emancipation and also, albeit sometimes with a considerable time-lag, political emancipation, which was often far from taking the form of clamoring for statehood (Hroch 2007a: 8-9).

Hroch also points out that the structure of national programmes and their results were not exclusively decided by the individual wishes and demands of the leading patriots: some objective and specific circumstances have to be taken into account, which can be categorised in three groups:

- the political system under which the national movement proceeded during Phase B and Phase C;
- the social structure of the non-dominant ethnic group;
- previous developments: the history of this specific group.

How important was the political regime in the given state? Concerning Phase B, he wrote, it is not enough to say that it was a late-absolutist regime. He encouraged to distinguish between, on the one hand, the 'legalist' system of the Habsburg empire, where the ruling elites camouflaged their dominance by historical claims and contracts concluded between Habsburgs and the representatives of non-dominant ethnic groups, and, on the other hand, the Ottoman rule based on unconcealed and repeatedly demonstrated conquest and force. Although not as brutal, the practice of Russian rule was similar. While the political opposition in Phase C could find and use 'lawful' arguments against the Austrian ruling elite, in the Ottoman and Russian empires, *any political opposition was a priori illegal*. In entering the field of politics, national movements had to take into account that they would be confronted with persecution (as cited in Periwal 1995: 68). *Linguistic* and *cultural demands* temporarily substituted some functions of political aims, especially where an oppressive regime did not allow political activities: until the 1850s in Austria, until 1905 in Russia. Opposing old state-elites, the leaders of national movements also opposed the old absolutist system, even if they did not – sometimes for opportunist reasons – verbalise this opposition. Also, in this respect, the linguistic and social programmes temporarily played a substitutional role for the political programme: as an opposition against the old regime (as cited in Periwal 1995: 68, 74). The struggle for political participation emerged with the introduction of a constitutional regime: in Austria after 1860, in Russia in 1905. A further form of substitution was included in the emerging historical consciousness rediscovering and remembering the glorious past. Patriotic agitators stimulated yearnings, sometimes nostalgic, sometimes militant, for some kind of restoration of old political institutions (Periwal 1995: 70).

Hroch emphasised that until the Second World War, both in Austro-Hungary and in Russia, the *demand for autonomy* remained the central point of the secessionist component in the programme of national movements. With the exception of the Magyars, whose national movement successfully ended by achieving a semi-state status, *no relevant political group demanded full independence*, and even in the Polish camp, autonomy seems to have been – after the defeat of the revolutions of 1848 and 1863 – the main goal. In Russia, only the Finnish national movement achieved some kind of autonomy, substituting an originally regional autonomy with a national one. Among other national movements, only in the Lithuanian case do we find a rather isolated voice demanding independence during the revolutionary year of 1905 (Periwal 1995: 73).

Hroch put forward two general theses for national movements: 1. The strength and timing of the call for self-determination did not depend upon the intensity of political oppression and had no correlation with the level of linguistic and cultural demands.

2. Self-determination became stronger and more successful in national movements which were based on a complete social structure of their non-dominant ethnic group and which could use some institutions or traditions of their statehood from the past.

I have chosen Miroslav Hroch's theoretical approach to small nationalism in Eastern and Central Europe (A-B-C schema) as a principal theoretical framework of the doctoral thesis to test the Karaite case. Therefore, some attention to the critical discussion of his theory will help for the critical application of his theory for the Karaite case study.

Some scholars criticised Hroch's theoretical approach for his relative inattention to nationalist doctrine. For instance, Siddiki, Paltineanu and Hoyo find it necessary to engage with nationalist ideology to understand the motives of national awakeners. Since national agitation requires patriots to define national boundaries, in their view, understanding nationalism requires some examination of its intellectual content (Maxwell 2012: 4, 5, 10).

Farhan Siddiki wrote:

Hroch by concentrating exclusively on socio-economic structure of society foregoes the power of nationalist ideology both as motivating force for political action and a legitimate tool which is utilized by nationalists (patriots in Hroch's work) to make political and cultural claims on the dominant nation (Maxwell 2012: 10).

Siddiki also brings forth the variable of intra-ethnic conflict (based primarily on political not cultural differences) within nations and shows how Hroch's stage theory disregards this variable by undertaking the homogeneity of political values and goals within a nation as essential (Maxwell 2012: 10).

Another criticism of some scholars relates to the point that Hroch's analysis conflated industrialisation and modernisation with 'the transition to capitalism' (Hroch 1985: 15, 26) or 'the coming of capitalist society' (Hroch 1985: 10). Scholars regard that in a study of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe, Hroch's stance is reasonable, but seems rather more problematic if scholars consider the early stages of national awakening in the Soviet Union, which was an outspokenly anti-capitalist state that nevertheless had experienced industrialisation and modernisation as vigorously as any capitalist society. Despite this weak point, Hroch's analysis of 19<sup>th</sup>-century national movements continues to inspire contemporary scholars studying the emergence of nationalism under Soviet Communism (Maxwell 2012: 5).

Among other critiques, Hobsbawm acknowledged in 1990 that common people were largely absent from nationalism research in the 1970 and 1980s (not only Hroch's): 'we still know very little about what national consciousness meant to the mass of the nationalities concerned'

(Hobsbawm 1995 (1990): 130). The causes for this neglect can be traced back to the origins of 'modern' nationalism research, roughly the period between the publication of Elie Kedourie's *Nationalism in Asia and Afrika* (1971) and Rogers Brubaker's *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (1992) (Van Ginderachter and Beyen 2012: 29-30). The theoretical framework, developed by the likes of Kedourie, Brubaker, Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Tom Nairn, Michael Hechter, Anthony Giddens, Michael Mann, Benedict Anderson and Miroslav Hroch relied on the assumption that nations are 'cultural construct[s], forged and engineered by various elites' since the 18<sup>th</sup> century at earliest (Smith 1998: 4). This paradigm emphasised top-down socialisation the superseding of old obsolete allegiances (to town, guild, region, religion and so on) by an overarching national identity. The general overinsistence on top-down processes and indoctrination led several scholars to impose the nationalist rhetoric of elites and states onto the mentalities of the masses they addressed (Van Ginderachter and Beyen 2012: 35).

Miroslav Hroch has also been criticised of overlooking of ordinary people. Hroch compared a number of 'small' national movements in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe (such as the Finnish in Russia, the Danish in Schleswig and the Flemish in Belgium). Using biographical data of the most active members of such groups, he describe an evolution in which some of these movements developed from phase A (folkloric interest), through B (political agitation), to become a mass affair in their last stage C. This mass phase remains a vague concept, as Hroch has not really elaborated on it (Van Ginderachter and Beyen 2012: 36).

Overall, Hroch's typology was criticised on fundamental accounts: missing links between phases and the failure to explain political processes due to an exclusive focus on social and economical relations. Operating only within these two spheres was bound to produce an incomplete and rigid explanatory model. The intellectual foundations, the political or 'the subjective' processes of the national movements were entirely absent from Hroch's analysis and that seemed to be the source of all criticism (Maxwell 2012: 49).

Hroch has nevertheless made an outstanding contribution to the classification of nationalism with his three developmental phases, which have attracted considerable attention from nationalism theorists (Arnason 53-54; Guibernau 96-98; McCrone 79-82; Smith *Nationalism and Modernism* 40, 56 as cited in Maxwell 2012: 101). Athena Leoussi's 2002 *Encyclopedia of Nationalism* introduced them as an important contribution to modernisation theory (Llobera 189 as cited in Maxwell 2012: 101). The same year, Lonnie Johnson, summarising Eastern European national movements in Alexander Motyl's similarly titled *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, treated Hroch's A-B-C schema as an unproblematic scholarly consensus, like Darwinian evolution (165) (Maxwell 2012: 101).

Hroch's three phases have entered the basic vocabulary of nationalism studies, and numerous scholars have used them to describe their research agenda (Maxwell 2012: 101). Hroch's

schema provides scholars with radically divergent interests a vocabulary for explaining their ideas to scholars inclined to use a word 'nationalism' in radically different ways (Maxwell 2012: 107).

Alexander Maxwell wrote:

So many scholars are familiar with Hroch's work that a reference to Hroch's phases quickly communicates which sorts of nationalist phenomena one has in mind. The A-B-C schema does not enjoy universal recognition, but even Hroch's detractors find it convenient to communicate their ideas in reference Hroch's schema. Nor does one need to accept Hroch's broader theory to use his terminology as a shorthand. Various quibbles about omissions, ambiguities or errors should not blind scholars to the advantages of a well-known terminology that facilitates discussion between different branches of nationalism studies. (Maxwell 2012: 107)

### **New Imperial History**

My study analyses the development of Karaite identity within the historical context of both the period of empires (Habsburg and Russian Empires as well as the USSR) and the nation-state (Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine). That is why I will briefly discuss the latest conceptions of Russian Imperial history. The concept of the nation-state has been discussed above in the discourse of theories on nationalism.

Gerasimov points out that a new stage in conceptualising Russian history through the prism of empire began in the early 1990s. In the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of new nations and national historiographies in its wake, historians faced the necessity of replacing the homogenising narrative of Russia's past as a nation-state with a more complex model of a polity that included other nation-building efforts (Gerasimov 2009: 10). The failure of the Soviet-style concept of the 'multinational state' and the tempting convenience of the historical self-descriptive trope of 'empire' provided for the rapid advance of Russian 'imperial studies' (Gerasimov: 10). Whether a 'prison of nations' or not, from now on Russia was treated as an empire in the broadest possible sense, as a large state dominating diverse populations and exercising an ambitious foreign policy. This early stage of the reassessment of Russian history as 'imperial' was shaped by the dominant nation-centred approach: if 'Russia' itself could no longer be conceived as a single nation (and hence could be called an 'empire'), it was seen as consisting of other nations, developing along the typical path of historical national awakenings, i.e. liberation movements and pushes for self-determination. The ethnic Russian populations were no different in this respect, if only less lucky (Gerasimov 2009: 10). A significant turn in research on Russian nationhood was occurred in the 1990s when Geoffrey Hosking (1997: xxv–xxvi) offered the provocative idea that in Russia, empire-building obstructed nation-building, and therefore, 'Russian nationhood had to be generated partly in opposition to the empire bearing its name' (Pavleeva 2011: 42).

If we agree with Simon Franklin and Emma Widdis (2004: 5, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 42) that part of the ‘problem’ of Russianness is its uncomfortable position between imperial and national identities, then the question naturally arises: *should we study Russia through the prism of theories of empire, or through theories of the nation-state?* The answer is not easy, as it seems that both have failed to provide an exhaustive analysis of Russian nationhood. A deeper problem, however, lies in the radical disjuncture between the concepts of empire and nation, caused mainly by the hegemony of the discourse of nation in social sciences. Pavleeva discusses a few new factors that problematise the established relationships between ‘national’ and ‘imperial’ in contemporary scholarship. Over the past century, the nation-state has established itself as the only legitimate form of polity, a fact that helps to explain the widespread pejorative understanding of empire as a ‘prison of nations’. However, today the very concept of nation-state and its legitimacy is facing a crisis and is being reconsidered within the context of contemporary global processes (Pavleeva 2011: 43).

The crisis of the concept of nation-state has led to a gradual ‘rehabilitation of empire’ in current academic and, to a lesser extent, political discourse (see, e.g. Berezin and Schain 2003; Paul, Ilkenberry and Hall 2003; Barkey and Von Hagen 1997, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 43; Semyonov and Smith 2018). ‘Empire’ is now often being associated with the concept of tolerance and with more effective management of ethnic and national heterogeneity than what can be observed in many contemporary nation-states. In addition, ‘bringing the empire back’ into studies of nationalism has helped scholars challenge the assumption that the contrasts between nation-states and empires corresponded to an incompatibility between the ideologies of nationalism and imperialism and has led to a reconsideration of the juxtaposing the terms empire-nation-state (Berger and Miller 2008, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 43). ‘Nation’ and ‘empire’ were traditionally viewed as polar opposites in prior scholarly writing (Pavleeva 2011: 43).

However, today, when the future of the nation-state appears uncertain in light of globalisation and European unification, this contrast appears less convincing, and recent research has started to problematise the fluid boundary between a multinational state and multinational empire. Many scholars now point out that certain characteristics commonly associated with empires can easily be applied to contemporary multinational states: ‘Many regimes combine features of empire and nation-state; hardly any are completely ethnically homogeneous, despite assimilation, ethnic cleansings, and genocides, or fully egalitarian’ (Suny 2008, 208–209; see also Blitstein 2006 and Beissinger 2005, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 43). As Katherine Verdery (1994, 3) has noted, ‘The hegemonic ‘nation-cum-state’ of Western political theory has long fitted poorly with the multinational realities of many of the world's states’ (Pavleeva 2011: 44). This turn was caused, among other things, by appeals to ‘recover history itself from the ideology of the nation-state’ (Pavleeva 2011: 44). Prasenjit Duara (1995: 5, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 44) has pointed to the fact that historical consciousness in modern society has been excessively framed by the nation-state (Pavleeva 2011: 44). He notes: ‘Social historians and others, while sometimes defying this claim in



practice, have not constructed a theoretical challenge to history as the History of the nation-state' (Duara 1996: 172, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 44). However, recently this approach that 'history and the nation had held for each other' is being directly confronted. On the other hand, Pavleeva observes that *as the contemporary methodological apparatus was formed in the era of nationalism, it is not fully suitable for analysing the imperial situation. The modern conception of empire might itself be a product of the rise of nationalism.* It seems that many contemporary theories of nationalism seem to share certain assumptions with more primordial conceptions when implicitly assuming the nation-state as an obvious and, in many cases, inevitable replacement for empires. In this sense, they did not move far from historical determinism and the teleology of the nation that inhabits national narratives (Pavleeva 2011: 44).

Pavleeva writes that one of the results of this theoretical inversion was that during the last few decades, the scholarly literature on Russia has started to abandon the idea of the mutual exclusivity and irreconcilability of 'nation' and 'empire'. Particularly, the first attempts at challenging Hosking's thesis that in Russia empire-building obstructed nation-building appeared, a thesis which for a long time had remained unshakeable. Without denying the existence of the dilemma between 'national' and 'imperial' in Russian history, some scholars argue that they were not necessarily strictly contradictory or incompatible (e.g. Miller 2008; Dolbilov 2007; Maiorova 2010; Dialla 2005, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 44). According to Mark Bassin, who made one of the first serious attempts at challenging Hosking's thesis:

Russian nationalists could at once embrace the entirety of their unmistakably multinational empire, and did so with singular devotion. Beyond this, the virtually unanimously endorsed the desirability and even necessity of further political – territorial expansion into non-Russian areas as an important part of their program of national advancement and renewal. ... Effectively, nationalism and imperial vision were joined in a common project and could not be divorced. (Bassin 1999: 12–13, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 44)

Referring to the pre-revolutionary situation in Russia, he further argues that

National discourses ... stood not in contradistinction to an imperial identity, but rather were subsumed almost without exception within a broader and more fundamental geopolitical vision of Russia as an empire. Indeed, one must search very hard to find any significant subjective sense of mutual exclusivity between the two. (Bassin 1999: 12–13, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 44)

As Pavleeva has noted, this contestation, however, was not expressed through the nation – empire juxtaposition, but rather through different visions of Russia as an empire (Pavleeva 2011: 44). Nation and empire thus could coexist in a kind of a 'symbiotic relationship' (Bassin 2006: 45, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 45).

Additionally, scholars showed an awareness of the partial inapplicability of the classical modernist theories of nationalism to the Russian case (Miller 2008; Gerasimov, Glebov 2003, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 45). Pavleeva points out that the vision of an imperial–national nexus in Russia might have differed profoundly from relations existing in any other European state and,

more importantly, from analytical conceptions developed in contemporary scholarship on nationalism and empires. This was the result of, among other things, the specifics of the Russian Empire, in which, in contrast to European maritime empires, there were no clear constitutional or territorial borders between the metropole and periphery. As a result, the Russian Empire had greater difficulties drawing distinctions between the imperial core, which could be transformed into a nation, and the periphery of the empire (see, e.g. Lieven 2001; Becker 2000, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 45).

Pavleeva has noted that the period of late imperial Russia is essential to a discussion of the interplay between empire and nation in Russian consciousness. In intellectual circles, this period was marked by intensified debates over national identity. This was a formative period for the vocabulary and the content of principle Russian 'nation-views', most of which continue to exist in the present day (Pavleeva 2011: 46). First of all, it is necessary to point out that the 'nation' itself was conceptualised and defined in crucially different ways in different parts of Russian society. Some intellectuals emphasised the ethnic nature of identity. At the same time, they also posited racial definitions, which were reflected in the pages of the Russian press and in scholarly works (Kovalevskii 1912; Sikorskii 1910; Men'shikov 1991). Some intellectuals, particularly the conservative monarchists, proposed a religious (Orthodox) definition of Russianness, following the principles of the 'Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality' formula, which since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had remained the basis of the Russian Empire's 'official nationalism' (Seton-Watson 1977; Anderson 2006). At the same time, another inclusive definition of the nation, one expressed mostly by liberals, was also increasingly gaining strength and based on the principle of *grazhdanstvennost* (or 'citizenship'), in which the nation was perceived as territorially and institutionally framed by the borders of the state (Pavleeva 2011: 46). These views on the nature of the nation served as a departure point for a definition of the place of empire in it. Pavleeva points to a variety of views ranging from the one extreme of those who preferred the dissolution of the empire, believing that the interests of the Russian nation suffered from the 'burdens of empire' to the other extreme that the Russian Empire already constituted a Russian nation-state. Those who promoted the former vision of the Russian nation thus included only Great Russians in it. During this time, however, the proponents of this view were in the minority and their position had a very limited number of supporters (Pavleeva 2011: 46).

Many historians tend to ascribe the latter vision to Russian nationalist thinking as a whole. As Theodore Weeks (1996: 5) notes:

Imperial Russia was not, and could not be, a nation-state, and yet the desire to equate Russia with the Great Russian nationality and the Orthodox Church was at times irresistible. (Theodore Weeks 1996: 5, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 46)

Since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this concept of Russia as a state identifying itself with the Great Russians found its expression in writings of the most prominent figures of Russian nationalist thought, such as Michael Katkov, Ivan Aksakov, or Nikolai Danilevskii. Katkov, for example, wrote:

There is in Russia one dominant nationality, one dominant language, which was developed by centuries of historical life. (Katkov 1887: 100–101, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 46)

Katkov stated that despite the variety of tribes with different languages and traditions, they all felt a sense of unity with ‘the Great Russian world ... in the unity of the state, in the unity of the supreme authority in the Tsar’ (Katkov 1887: 100–101, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 46). A similar view was expressed by Danilevskii (1991: 486, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 46), who argued that the Russian state was based upon a single Russian nation. Like Katkov, he did not believe that the multi-ethnic diversity of the empire contradicted this statement. Over the centuries, he argued, Russians had absorbed the various peoples of the empire through a process of assimilation. Like many others, Danilevskii proudly stressed this ‘assimilating power’ of the Russians. He therefore believed that the imperial population already represented the Russian nation. Among others who promoted this view were such prominent Russian historians as Vasilii Klyuchevskii and Sergei Solovyov, who in their works adopted the Russian national narrative and generally neglected the multi-ethnic diversity of the Russian empire (see Sanders 1999, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 47). These optimistic, or ‘naive’, views on the degree of assimilation were harshly challenged by the events of 1905. Among the many illusions destroyed by the first Russian revolution were any illusions of the ‘national integrity’ of the Russian Empire (Wortman 2006, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 47).

Between the two extremes described above, exclusive and ‘naive’, existed a whole variety of views seeking to transform the empire into a nation-state (Pavleeva 2011: 47). The majority of rightists, while subscribing to the idea of ‘Russia for the Russians’ (Loukianov 2008, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 47), were determined to preserve the ‘one and indivisible Russia’ through assimilation of the subject peoples. Thus, the ‘goal’ of all nationalities should be to merge with the Russians. Of course, some of them were regarded as intrinsically unassimilable, or even undesirable, such as, for example, Poles and Jews. Rather than trying to integrate them into Russian society, they had to be marginalised or even abandoned. By and large, however, the possibility of changing one’s national affiliation was widely accepted among the rightists. It is worth noting that some of them rejected the rigid principle of ‘Russia for Russians’ and proclaimed the principles of ‘imperial nationalism’ (or ‘state nationalism’) (Pavleeva 2011: 47). Nevertheless, even these supporters of ‘imperial nationalism’ never questioned the hegemonic and dominant position of Russians in the empire: their main goal was the protection of ‘the unity and indivisibility of the Russian empire and the preservation in all of its parts of the supremacy of the Russian nationality’,

to quote the program of the All Russian National Union (*Natsionalisty v Tret'nei Gosudarstvennoi Dume* 1912, 7, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 47).

The liberals, influenced by the model of the Western nation-state as an instrument of political progress, also hoped that Russia could be turned into a nation-state. This perspective sought to reorganise the ethnic variety of the Russian empire within a framework of an imperial 'civic nation'. Different policies aimed at integrating Russian and non-Russian peoples into a single nation, defined in terms of imperial citizenship, were proposed. Fierce opponents of Russification, they accepted the possibility of creating a multi-ethnic nation, based on the civic principle of political and social integration, which did not require linguistic and cultural homogeneity. The adoption of a Russian ethos, according to them, could be achieved naturally and voluntarily through peaceful assimilation into the 'superior Russian culture' (Pavleeva 2011: 47). The assumption that Russian culture and the Russian language would remain in a predominant position and that a tolerant policy towards non-Russians would stimulate a natural process of social integration and cultural assimilation was implicit to point of this view, which was most consistently articulated in this period by Petr Struve and Pavel Miliukov, the leading members of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Pavleeva 2011: 47). Petr Struve (1997: 170–171, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 47) conceived of the Russian nation as a 'nation in the making', comparing it to the American nation. His conception of 'liberal nationalism' favoured a Greater Russia to which most of the nationalities would have to, or rather, 'would eagerly' assimilate. According to his point of view, Russia was not a nation-state but rather a 'national empire' (Petr Struve 1997: 170–171, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 48). The main peculiarity of this 'national empire', according to Struve, is the existence of a 'national core'; such a national core dominates the culture of the whole state, in which 'Russian tribes [have] melted into a single nation'. Unlike Struve, Pavel Miliukov was not as optimistic about the will of non-Russians to assimilate. Miliukov was convinced that some non-Russian peoples had already developed their own distinct national consciousness. The idea of a state nation could, according to him, now be realised only in the form of a 'state of nationalities', where a real accommodation, rather than naive hopes of assimilation, should be provided via a 'healthy nationality policy' (Stockdale 1996, 189; for an analysis of the liberal conceptions of Russian nationalism, see Malinova 2000; (Pavleeva 2011: 48).

Pavleeva notes that both the right-wing and liberal nationalist rhetoric on the Russian Empire wanted it to remain 'one and indivisible'. This intention to maintain and even broaden the empire could be combined with Russian nationalism if it corresponded with the interests of the Russians (Pavleeva 2011: 48).

The 'inventory' of different 'nation-views' that existed in late imperial Russia has revealed a great heterogeneity of positions. However, despite the differences, all of them emphasised the hegemonic position of Russian culture and the Russian language and the preservation of imperial integrity. Even if both rightists and liberals tended to exaggerate the success of assimilation, the

important point is that they understood their ideal of Russia as a nation-state in a long-term perspective. Pavleeva emphasises that the preservation of empire was a central theme in these discussions (except for a minority of persons, who questioned the burdens of empire) – ‘The Russian state is one and indivisible’, to quote the very first article of the fundamental law of 1906. According to Karjaharm (2010: 40, as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 48), the ‘integrity and unity’ of the state was cited by nearly all Russian political forces at that time, despite the fact that each had a different idea of the nature of a multi-ethnic state. What differed were the ways of maintaining the general vision of empire – from the naïve perspective, equating the empire with the Russian national state in accordance with the ‘official nationality’ principles, to the various prospects of Russia as a ‘nation-state in the making’ (Wortman 2011). It proved difficult for Russian intellectuals to distinguish themselves from the imperial state. Referring to Russian literature, Ilya Prizel (1998, 170) has noted:

Russian authors such as Radishchev, Lermontov, Griboiedev, and Gogol readily challenged the inequities and the absurdities of Russian society. However, rarely did the critique of Russian society expand to a critique of imperialism. When it came to commenting on Russia's state policy, Russian literature was consistently pro-imperial. (as cited in Pavleeva 2011: 48)

Pavleeva concluded that the ‘imperial’ dimension was present in practically all of the above-mentioned ‘nation-views’. The dichotomy between nation and empire has been considered to a greater or lesser extent by all thinkers involved in the debate about national identity in Russia for the last two centuries. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these two sets of representations – nation and empire – openly competed in the symbolic interpretation of what the Russian nation should look like. Their analysis recovers the ambiguities and, more importantly, the interconnections between discourses on the ‘nation’ and ‘empire’. Pavleeva has argued that the simplification of such dichotomies as ‘*ruskii* versus *rossiiskii*’, or ‘national versus imperial’, and the disjunctive application of the ideal-typical models of ‘empire’ and ‘nation’ appear to be inappropriate for any analysis of Russian national identity. This is a case, in fact, in which a rigid distinction between these dimensions may not be helpful, and approaches that focus exclusively on such dichotomies run the risk of lapsing into analytical clichés and interpretational illusions, like, for example, that the Russians did not make a distinction between nation and empire. The scholarly literature has long been using such notions as ‘imperial’ or ‘great power’ nationalism when referring to the Russian case, and much has been written about the meaning of ‘great power status’ in Russian national identity (mostly in a negative sense), which in the Russian case was associated with considerable prestige. As Geoffrey Hosking has noted:

great power status in itself was both a thoroughly Russian concept, and a thoroughly Russian practice. (Hosking 1998: 453)

However, most of these studies were descriptive rather than theoretical or explanatory in nature. Until recently, there were no attempts to include this ‘imperial’ dimension into an analysis of

Russian national identity. The dimension should be viewed not just as an 'ingredient', but as a variable, which, along with others, helped form a particular 'nation-view'. Pavleeva asks: What if we start regarding 'empire' not as a substantial or 'territorial' entity but as a symbol? It would indeed turn out that the gap between these two notions is not that irreconcilable after all. If we modify these schemes by 'adding plurals' and analysing the interplay of different variables (including 'national' and 'imperial'), we will see that the range of Russian 'nation-views' exceeds the framework of such simple dichotomies (Pavleeva 2011: 49)

Integrating the 'imperial' variable into an analysis of Russian national identity and, at the same time, acknowledging the existence of multiple ways of expressing and articulating it allows for a more complicated reconsideration of the issues of supra-national identities and the concept of imperial citizenship. These issues are particularly urgent in contemporary Russia, where the pro-imperial discourse is rapidly gaining strength. What most of the authors tend to neglect is the fact that the Russian state collapsed twice during the last century when acting as an empire, and contemporary Russia seems to be following the same imperial path as well. It looks like Russians, despite all the hopes and expectations of Western academics and the political public, still are stubbornly resisting efforts to create a 'proper nation-state' (Pavleeva 2011: 49).

To summarise this chapter, my analysis of the development of a Karaite identity from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been based on the constructivist theory of ethnicity and nationalism. According to this theory, ethnicity is understood as a conscious choice by an individual or group in order to satisfy certain interests, to achieve certain goals or to respond to social or political changes. In the process of ethnic identity formation, elites play important roles. Ethnic sentiment is created through historical differences in culture as well as myths, conceptions, and doctrines, which are formed as intellectual and social constructs (Tishkov 1997: 12).

Based on the constructivism approach, the non-essentialist perspective on identity, including Nagel's shopping cart metaphor in the construction of ethnic identity, and ethno-symbolism theory, I analyse such defining points for the construction of a Karaite ethnic identity for each of the studied historical periods as *mentalities* (how Karaites identify themselves – views on their origin, ethnic belonging, etc.) and *culture*, including language, religion, myth, memories, traditions, cuisine, terminology and symbols. As Anthony Smith argues, *symbols* – emblems, hymns, festivals, habitats, customs, linguistic codes, sacred places and the like – were powerful differentiators and reminders of the unique culture and fate of the ethnic community. So were shared memories of key events and epochs in the history of the community: memories of liberation, migration, the golden age, of victories and defeats, of heroes and saints and sages (Smith 1998: 191).

I will study the development of Karaite identity within the historical context of the Habsburg and Russian Empires and the USSR, and the nation-states of Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine

and the Russian Federation. Thus, in my analysis I will be considering theories on nationalism (particularly cultural nationalism and Romantic nationalism) and the ‘New Imperial History’ approach. I will also choose Miroslav Hroch's theoretical approach to small nationalism in Eastern and Central Europe (A-B-C model) as the principal theoretical framework of the doctoral thesis to test the Karaite case.

### **Chapter 3. Preface. Historical Background and Preconditions for the Beginning of the Karaite ‘National Movement’: Early Studies on the Ethnic Origin of the Karaites by Non-Karaites**

This chapter begins with a discussion of the historical background and preconditions for the beginning of the Karaite national movement (which developed later into a national movement) in the Russian Empire based on earlier research. The chapter chronologically starts from the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 1783 by the Russian Empire and ends with the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The second part of the chapter presents a collection of sources regarding early research on the ethnic origin of the Crimean Karaites. The research was inspired by new material on early Karaite history in the Crimean Peninsula. The material was discovered by a Karaite scholar named Abraham Firkovich. I dedicate a significant part of my study to a discussion of the ethnic origin of the Karaites by non-Karaites in scholarly research because outside opinions had a great impact on the construction of Karaite identity. This can be found in the following chapter dedicated to the Karaite reaction to scholarly research on the ethnic origin of the Karaites.

#### **Historical Preconditions for the Karaite National Movement**

I begin the study of Karaite national movement during the Russian Imperial period of the 18<sup>th</sup> century because attempts by the Karaites to separate themselves juridically from other Jews did not start before the partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795), the annexation of Crimea (1783) and the transition of lands populated by Karaites to the Russian crown. Moreover, we cannot speak about Karaite ethnic nationalism before national theories and notions of the ‘nation’ and ‘nationalism’ had appeared in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kizilov 2011: 131; see also Kizilov 2014: 377). The Karaites proposed an ethnic definition for their group later when the rise of European nationalism and the struggle for civil rights brought other ethnic and nationalistic issues to their attention (Harviainen 2003a: 642). Before that period, we can speak only of the *religious* difference between Karaites and other Jews. Ph. Miller has the following to say:

None of the alleged heretics had ever claimed to be anything but Jewish. Indeed, each faction claimed to represent the most authentic manifestation of Judaism. Through the Middle Ages, the Karaites considered theirs the oldest and truest and hence the only correct interpretation of Pentateuch, despite the attacks of Rabbanite scholars, who branded them heretics, though they did not cease to consider them Jews. (Miller 1993: xv)



At the time, Karaites called themselves *yehudim* (Hebrew: יְהוּדִים — Jews) or *yehudim karaim* (יְהוּדִים קְרָאִים — Karaite Jews).

In 1774, a Karaite named Itzko Salomonowicz appealed to the state chancellery of Austrian Galicia with a petition asking for a reduction in taxes. In that petition, he pointed out that he was not a Jew, but a peasant (Rabbinite Jews usually did not practice farming). The Empress Maria Theresa approved the petition (Kizilov 2011: 131). It was the first known precedent for a *juridical distinction* between Karaites and Rabbanites on a governmental level in Europe (Kizilov 2009; Kizilov 2011: 132–133; Harviainen 2003: 648). Nathan Schur has even suggested that this precedent constitutes the starting point of the Karaite ‘National Movement’, but Mikhail Kizilov has dismissed the idea of a Karaite ‘National Movement’ at this early period of time and called the event instead ‘the earliest manifestation of Karaite national feelings’ (Schur 1995: 36–37, 194–195, 215–216).<sup>23</sup> I consider this event the first attempt at a Karaite emancipation from the Rabbanites.

Later, in 1795, Karaites in the Russian Empire did not fail to mention the precedent (Harviainen 2003a: 648). As Kizilov has showed, the reason for the approval of the first petition was that in 1772, after the first partition of Poland, a Karaite population in Galicia (Halicz, Kokizow and some other small villages) passed under Austrian rule. He notes:

Talmudic Jews, alien to agriculture produced an unpleasant impression to the Austrian Emperor Kaiser Joseph II which he had never seen before. The only exception were Karaites. Count Johann Anton von Pergen, a governor of Galicia in 1772–1774, provided the Emperor with a very favourable report on the hard-working Karaites, exemplary farmers and honest peasants, who, in addition, rejected the Talmud. (Kizilov 2009)<sup>24</sup>

Kizilov was of the opinion that the Austrian state administration had hoped to use the Karaites as a good example for other Jews and as a tool of anti-Rabbanite propaganda. That was why, in his view, the Karaites were excluded when the empress Maria Theresa introduced the ‘Judengesetze’ (Jewish statutes) in 1776. Moreover, in 1789 she equated the Karaite population with Christians rather than Jews in fiscal and civic matters (Freund 1991: 63).

The next incident occurred in Polish Lutsk when the Karaites attempted to ‘exclude themselves from the list of Jewish subjects of Poland’. Kizilov referred to a Karaite memorandum to the Jewish Commission of the Great Sejm (Parliament) in Poland in 1790, in which Karaites pointed to their difference from other Jews (Kizilov 2011: 134):

We dress as Poles. We make use of the Hebrew for religious purposes only. We maintain separate cemeteries. In other words, we differ from Jews in everything. Any measures aimed at equating us with Jews would be considered by us as a most severe punishment and, to our immense sorrow, force us to move to the *Turkish lands*, whence our forefathers were once brought.<sup>25</sup> (my italics)

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<sup>23</sup> Kizilov criticised Schur’s notion of the existence of ‘a Karaite National Movement’ in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because the Karaites were never organised into anything that can be called a ‘National Movement’ (Kizilov 2011: 135, ref. 12).

In his other article, Kizilov also used the term *national movement*, but to refer to a later period of time (Kizilov 2007: 337).

<sup>24</sup> See more in Karniel 1985: 291; Schur 1992: 112

<sup>25</sup> The passage has been translated into English; see Freund 1991: 60.

The full text of the petition in the Polish language was re-published with some slight inaccuracies; see Balaban 1927: 51–53.

As Kizilov did not have any evidence on how the Sejm reacted, he wrote that the petition failed because of ‘rapid political changes’ resulting in the second partition of Poland and the annexation of Lutsk, Troki, Wilno and other Polish territories with Karaite communities by the Russian Empire. He pointed out the interesting facts that, firstly, Lutsk Karaites declared their complete difference from Jews (except in using Hebrew for religious purposes) and, secondly, they warned the government that if the petition was not favourably accepted, they would immigrate to the homeland of their forefathers, the Turkish lands, i.e. apparently to Turkey in the Ottoman Empire (Kizilov 2011: 134). To my knowledge, this reference to Turkey as the homeland of their forefathers might have been considered as a first attempt by the Lutsk Karaites to differentiate themselves from Rabbinical Jews on a basis other than religious or occupational. Moreover, it was also an attempt to distance themselves from the Jewish homeland, Israel. However, I agree with Kizilov that the reason for the petition was economic and political rather than nationalistic (his term) (Kizilov 2011: 135) or identity-based (my term). He concluded that the Karaites were trying to avoid being associated with the Jewish community: in 1790, a special Jewish commission was created in the Polish Sejm and anti-Jewish laws were passed (Kizilov 2011: 134).

It is probably too early to identify the beginnings of a Karaite ‘National Movement’ as a result of the first three petitions (1774 in Habsburg, Austria; 1790 in Poland; 1795 in the Russian Empire), as Nathan Shur has done (Schur 1995: 36–37, 194–195, 215–216). However, petitions could definitely be understood as an effort by the Karaites to emancipate from Rabbinical Jews and as one of the first signs of an inceptive Karaite proto-national movement. In this study, I will use the term National Movement (see the Theory part of this study on the terms nation and nationalism). The term is used to refer to the Karaite demands for the right to have their own culture and be accepted as a particular group. To be precise, the Karaite movement shall instead be called a ‘proto-national movement’ because the Karaites did not demand any political rights. However, I will mostly use the term ‘national movement’ to mean a proto-national movement.

Roman Freund also uses the term ‘emancipation’. He specified that the emancipation or *de-Judification* of Karaites from Jewishness in Tsarist Russia went on almost simultaneously with, albeit separately from, the emancipation patterns in Austria (Schur 1995: 64).

Crimean Karaite communities also began a process of emancipation from the Rabbanite Jews after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Empire at the end of 1783 (Miller 1993: xvi). As Miller has noted, the reasons were the same as those in the Western parts of the Russian Empire, i.e. economic and political (Miller 1993: xvi). One of the reasons for the emancipation sentiments had to do with the government’s anti-Semitic policies (Miller 1993: 5) as well as a prejudicial and even hostile attitude of Russian officials towards Jewish people. One should bear in mind that there were no Jewish communities in Russia for a long period before the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Russian Empire acquired more than 500,000 Jews after the Second

and the Third Partitions of Poland in 1793 and 1795 (Pipes 1975: 3–20). The Russian authorities established a pale, imposed a double-taxation system on the Jewish population in 1794 throughout the Empire and, in general, had a negative attitude towards them. Karaite communities were better treated by the Russian authorities than the Rabbanites. There was precedent for such treatment. They had previously received numerous favours from Tatar, Lithuanian and Polish rulers before becoming a part of the Russian Empire.<sup>26</sup> In contrast, the Russian administration did not distinguish between Rabbanite and Karaite Jews.

As for the economic reasons for the Karaite emancipation, Dan Shapira and Nathan Schur have indicated that Karaites in the Ottoman Crimea became wealthier than Rabbanites by historical accident. Namely, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the Russian annexation, the Crimean Karaites profited from the lands of Greeks and Armenians who had migrated from Crimea to Russia during the Crimean Civil War during the reign of Sahin-Girey. Then, after the Russian annexation, Karaites profited from the lands of Tatars migrating to the Ottoman Empire. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cities of Gözleve and Odessa became flourishing ports and many Crimean Karaites succeeded in those places as traders and became wealthy (Shapira 2003a: 5; see also Shapira 2002b: 283–294).<sup>27</sup>

Schur notes about Karaites in Crimea that:

While Rabbanites were mainly artisans and peddlers, many Karaites were wealthy landowners, owning tobacco plantations, orchards and salt mines. Their relations with the authorities were on equal social footing. (Schur 1992: 114)

Additionally, the Crimean Karaites controlled 60% of the tobacco trade in the Russian Empire (Kizilov 2014: 379). That is why Philip Miller cited their economic status as one of the main reasons for the Karaites' success in Tsarist Russia (Miller 1993: 33–34).

As John Klier has pointed out, the Crimean Karaites were so interested in separating themselves from the Rabbanites more than other Karaite communities in order to safeguard their economic advantage. So, it was reasonable for a small Karaite community to resist a merger with the Rabbinic Jewish majority from the former Polish lands. The Karaites argued that they differed from Rabbinic Jews because they cultivated the soil and had not been spoiled by the Talmud (a book hated by the Russian authorities) (Klier 1995: 53).

In the winter of 1795, the Karaites sent a delegation to the Russian authorities with a petition to grant them exemption from the double taxation. They were successful. In June 1795, Catherine issued a decree exempting 'Crimean Jews called Karaites' from the double taxation

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26 In 1441, Grand Duke Casimir Jagello (later Kazimierz/Casimir IV, King of Poland) granted Karaites the same status as the Gentile municipalities in Vilnius, Trakai and Kaunas (Kowno). This and other charters issued by the Lithuanian and Polish authorities assured personal, religious, jurisdictional and commercial freedom for the Karaites (Harviainen 2003a: 645–646).

In Crimea, Khans, starting from Hacı I Giray (Geray) in 1459, issued beneficial *yarlyks*, granting Karaite Jews protection and exemption from taxation as well as fixing their rights to property (See Firkovich, Z.A. 1890).

27 See also a discussion on the history of their wealth accumulation in Miller (1993): Introduction and especially 15–17; Miller 2000: 340–341.

(Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov 1900: 340); their rights to their landed properties were also assured (Harviainen 2003a: 648). Miller highlights the fact that:

Although the Karaites were still regarded as Jews, they had received, for the first time [in the Russian Empire], official governmental recognition of an identity and status that was distinct from those of the Rabbanites. (Miller 1993: 13–14)

It is assumed that the exemption granted by Catherine to the Crimean Karaites was also extended to the Karaites of Polish Volhynia (present Ukraine) and Lithuania (Miller 1993: 14).

In Kizilov's view, both the Habsburg and Russian Empires favoured the first Karaite petitions as part of an effort to make them into 'exemplary Jews' and use them as a tool of their anti-Talmudic (i.e. anti-Rabbanite) policies (Kizilov 2011: 135):

Karaites became an anti-Rabbinical tool for European and especially Russian administrations at the end of 18–19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, Russian officials were saying to the Rabbanites: 'Forget about the Talmud, and you will be treated by the state as favourably as your non-Talmudic brethren, the Karaites'. Echoes of anti-Rabbinical propaganda can be found in descriptions of travellers of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which were based on the contrast between 'good Jews-Karaites' who did not participate in Christ's crucifixion, and 'bad Rabbinical Jews', spoiled by the Talmud. (Kizilov 2007: 332)

Miller and Kizilov mention three reasons for the success of Karaites' petitions in securing particular rights in Tsarist Russia. The first had to do with *the personal influence* of the head of the petition expedition to St. Petersburg, *Solomon Babovich*, the leader of the Evpatorian community. He was a well-established and wealthy merchant who had successfully established contacts among high officials of the military and the provincial government (Miller 1993: 15–17, 33–34). The second reason had to do with the *good economic position* of the Crimean Karaites in general, especially of those from Evpatoriya. Miller here cites Mary Holderness, who stayed in Evpatoriya: 'The Karaites are commonly wealthy and are on all accounts, the most respectable' (Holderness 1823: 179). The third reason was that the *non-Talmudic* successful Karaites might have served as a good example for a correction policy for spoiled Rabbanite Jews (a tool of anti-Talmudic, i.e. anti-Rabbanite, policy) (Kizilov 2011: 135).

Kizilov has convincingly argued that the Karaite movement for a better legal status in the Russian Empire also led to the revival of a Karaite interest in their own ethnic past (Kizilov 2007: 335). Before that time, the Karaites had mainly produced religious literature, not historical accounts (Kizilov 2007: 335). They wrote in the petition of 1795 to the governor-general of Ekaterinoslavl and Taurida Platon Zubov the following:

Our Community called Karaites is *ancient Jewish*, settled in Crimea apparently about *450 years ago*. (Firkovich 1890: XX–XXI; Belyi 1994: 31–32) (my italics and translation)

It is important to note that at this stage, the Karaites considered themselves to be Jewish. Moreover, the source seems to testify to the fact that before the period of Firkovich's finds (the 1840s), the Karaites had a certain oral tradition about the time of their settlement on the peninsula (around 1350) (see below).

In the next petition, of 1825, to the Russian Emperor Alexander I, the Karaites stated similarly:

We all Karaites are descendants of one *ancient Jewish tribe*, which settled in Crimea more than *four hundred centuries ago*, and with other Crimean peoples became subjects of the blessed state of Your Imperial Highness. (For the text of the petition, see Belyi 1994: 32–33) (my italics and translation)

If the previous petition was unclear on the question of whether the Karaites were referring to their religious or ethnic origin, the petition of 1825 seemed to refer explicitly to their ethnic origin tracing back to a particular Jewish tribe.

We can consider both petitions as a source of Karaite self-identification at that time.

In 1827, the Karaite petition succeeded again and they were granted exemption from military service in return for the payment of an exemption fee (Miller 1993: 29–31). The next year Lithuanian and Volhynian Karaites were granted the same right (Harviainen 2003a: 649). However, Karaites were still considered Jews under Russian law (Miller argues that Russian law recognised the Karaites as a separate nationality only in 1863; 1993: xvi). In 1835, they voluntarily abandoned part of their Jewish identity, officially changing their name from ‘Jews-Karaites’ to ‘Russian Karaites of Old Testamentary Religion’, and later to just ‘Karaites’.<sup>28</sup> It was not until 1863, though, that the tsar formally recognised Karaism as a particular nationality (Miller's term; 1993: xvi).

Scholars consider the establishment of the Karaite Spiritual Authority (*Karaimskoe Duhovnoe Pravlenie* – note that the word ‘Jewish’ is not included in the name) in 1837 to also be an important milestone in the Karaite emancipation movement from Jewishness (see Miller 1993: xvi; Harviainen 2003: 649; Kizilov 2014: 379–380). Another Council for the Karaites in the Western Provinces was established in Trakai in 1850. Miller (1993: xv) views this event as cause for an unprecedented split in Judaism. Harviainen highlights the fact that from the viewpoint of European nationalism, there is no doubt that the Kipchak-Turkic native language, the Karaite creed and numerous inherited habits and customs pertaining to both spiritual and material culture were sufficient factors for delineating the Karaites as representative of an independent ethnic or national group (Harviainen 2003a: 649).

That is why, in his view, the establishment of an independent Karaite Spiritual Consistory set the Karaites apart from the administrative bodies of the Jews from the standpoint of European nationalism (Harviainen 2003a: 649). Kizilov also regards this event as very important for the emancipation of the Karaites:

Now, when the Karaites had their own board of spiritual administration and were not included in the Rabbanite *Kahal* system, the Russian authorities stopped considering the Karaites as part of the Jewish religious community. (Kizilov 2014: 379–380)

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<sup>28</sup> In a letter to a high-ranking official (Governor-General Vilenski), the Troki Karaites asked that the name Jews not be used to refer to them, but to call them instead ‘Russian Karaites of Old Testamental Religion’. He received a positive answer (See *O proiskhozhdenii sekty* 1856: 10, 13).

See also *Sbornik starinnykh gramot* 1890: xxviii–xxix.

And as Kizilov suggests (2014: 379–380), at this point the Karaites apparently also stopped regarding themselves as part of the Jewish people.

Thus, we can probably consider the year 1837 as a reference point of the beginning of a Karaite ‘National Movement’, though such a movement was the result (not an inception) of the emancipation and national revival, which had started earlier.

In 1863, the Karaites were granted the same rights as Russian Christians (Smirnov 1890: xxviii–xxix). In contrast, the Russian Rabbanite Jews achieved the same status only after the 1917 Revolution (Harviainen 2003a: 649). As Phillip Miller (1993: xvi; 2000: 335) has pointed out, at least the law of 1863 formally recognised the Karaites as a separate *nationality*.

But before the most beneficial law for Karaites was issued in 1863, the state administration of Tsarist Russia decided it had to be sure that the Karaites deserved such a distinguished position (Kizilov 2011: 135). In 1839, a governor-general of Novorossiia, Count Mikhail Vorontsov, sent an official inquiry (Smirnov 1890: VII–VIII)<sup>29</sup> to the Karaite Spiritual Authority requesting well-grounded answers to questions about the origin of the Karaites, the time of their arrival in Crimea, peculiarities about their religion and, most importantly, the reasons for their separation from the Rabbanite Jews (Kizilov 2011: 138–139). The answers were to serve as a legal explanation of the Karaite request to separate themselves from the Rabbanite Jews. To their own surprise, the Karaite communities found that they had almost no historical documents on the matter, and thus, they were not even able to answer simple questions about when and why they had come to Crimea (Firkovich 1911: 83).<sup>30</sup> So, they entrusted a respectable Karaite scholar, Abraham Firkovich (1786–1874),<sup>31</sup> with the task of finding historical materials that would be able to provide answers to the questions listed above. Firkovich is one of the most well-known of Karaite names, whose fame spread far beyond the Karaite community. Tyszkiewicz has called him a ‘sort of Karaite Schliemann’ (Tyszkiewicz 1982; see also Bohdan 1927) and, according to Freund, he ‘devoted himself entirely to the consolidation of a separate Karaite nation’ (Freund 1991: 64). Firkovich, an amateur archaeologist and a historiographer, did not let the Karaites down in his ideological zeal to produce ‘evidence’ (Freund 1991: 64). He made his most sensational finds in the 1830s and 1840s. Even to this day, their authenticity remains open for debate.<sup>32</sup> But resolving such a debated is not the purpose of this study, which will focus more on the far-reaching effect of his finds. Firkovich’s

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29 A full text of the inquiry was published in Belyi 1995–1996: 114.

30 It is worth noting that before the official inquiry of 1839, a French marshal named Marmon visited a Karaite community in Evpatoriya in 1834 and asked them a few basic questions about their history and origin. To their own shame, the Karaite elders could not give any meaningful response. The marshal was surprised that they did not even remember what had happened 300 years earlier (Firkovich 1911: 83).

31 On Abraham Firkovich’s bibliography, see Harviainen 2003b: 875–892; Harviainen 1998: 66–70; Harviainen 1999: 97–106; Shapira, Dan 2003; see also the appendix ‘Biographies’.

32 For a discussion of the authenticity of A. Firkovich’s findings, see Babalikhshvili 1987: 5–12; Chwolson 1882; Chwolson 1884; Chwolson 1866; Chwolson 1871; Fedorchuk 2006: 77–90; Fedorchuk <<http://turkology.tk/library/112>>, accessed 15 November 2016; Firkovich 1872;

Harkavy 1876; Harkavy 1877: 98–121; Harkavy & Strack 1875; Kokizov 1910; Kunik 1876; Shapira 2003b; Strack 1876; Vasyutinskaya 2003; see also the appendix ‘Forgeries’.

finds were crucial for the development of Karaite ethnic nationalism. Taken together, Vorontsov's enquiry, Firkovich's findings and debate surrounding them stimulated Karaite interest in their own history and national consciousness (Kizilov 2014: 386). Abraham Firkovich and his material created the basis for the construction of the ethnic 'uniqueness' of Karaites (Kizilov 2014: 386). It was also crucial for a change in how non-Karaites identified the Karaites. Not only did the Karaites pay attention to Firkovich's finds, but for the first time Russian scholars, especially Orientalists, Turkologists and publicists, became interested in the Karaite Jews living in the Russian Empire and in their origin and history. Even though some scholars called into question the authenticity of those finds quite quickly, the findings still became the main source for scholars, and especially for the Karaites themselves, in studying the history of the Karaite ethnogenesis in the Russian Empire for a long time.

### Arguments presented by Abraham Firkovich

Firkovich discovered ancient epitaphs on Karaite tombs and intriguing colophons in ancient manuscripts. The most interesting of them, which was also the most influential in terms of the Karaites' fate, was the so-called Madjalis Scroll, discovered by Firkovich in Dagestan in 1840. The Majalis Scroll is a lengthy copy of a 1513 epigraph to the Derbent Torah, dated 604 AD.<sup>33</sup>

The question of the Madjalis Scroll's authenticity provoked a complicated debate, which has continued right up until the present. However, in Harviainen's opinion, even if we consider that the epigraph is a later work, the story described in it might contain true local legends, i.e. an oral tradition (Harviainen 2003: 638). The Madjalis text proposed a new narration on when and how the Karaite Jews had arrived in Crimea. It reads that the Crimean Karaites were descendants of the ancient Jews exiled by Salmanasar from Samaria in 722 BC. They had arrived in the Crimean Peninsula in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC along with armies of the Persian king Cambyses to fight against the Scythians.<sup>34</sup>

Among other crucial materials found by Firkovich were Torah manuscripts with 65 *colophons*, most of which had been written in Crimea. Fifty-three of them contained postscripts about agreements on ownership of the manuscripts, which give an interesting (genuine or not) interpretation of the early history of the Crimean Karaites ('Drevnie Evreyskie kKodeksy' 1844: 642). One of the colophons says that the manuscript was granted to a *Khazar* community in Solhat.

Another group of artefacts found by Firkovich are *epitaphs* with *Turkic* names on the Karaite grave markers in the Karaite cemetery, *Chufut Kale*. The epitaphs dated back to the

<sup>33</sup> The Derbent Torah and the Madjalis Scroll can be found in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg; call numbers *First Firkovich Collection*, Evr. A 1, and C-10, resp.

On an analysis of the Madjalis document, see Harviainen 2003b: 55–77; for criticism of it, see Shapira 2007: 303–393; Shapira 2006: 131–180.

<sup>34</sup> For the full Madjalis text, see T. Harviainen 2003b: 55–77.

beginning of the Common Era (the earliest was dated 6 A.D.) (Firkovich 1872; *Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennikh* 1829: 263–284; *Zapiski Odesskogo* 1844: 640–649). Among the other ancient epitaphs, the scholar found a monument to a legendary Jew, *Yitzhak ha-Sangari* (deceased in 767 AD), who had converted the Khazars to Judaism.<sup>35</sup> Next to his monument, Firkovich found a monument to his wife, *Sangarit*. These finds ought to show that Yitzhak ha-Sangari was a Karaite Jew who had converted Khazars not to Rabbinic Judaism but to Karaite Judaism.<sup>36</sup>

These monuments, which total more than 100,<sup>37</sup> caused a great sensation in academic circles:

‘Amazement hardly leaves a place for thoughts!’, wrote one scholar at the time (‘*Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy*’ 1844: 645).

Despite the fact that questions about the authenticity of the documents provoked debates quite quickly, which still continue, they dramatically changed the fate of the Eastern European Karaites. They increased the reputation of the Karaites and played a beneficial role in the Karaite movement to improve their legal status and gain emancipation from the Rabbanite Jews.

### **Ancient Karaite Settlements in Crimea and the Glorious Karaite Ancestors ‘Granted’ by Abraham Firkovich**

For those who trusted the materials found by Firkovich, the perspective on Karaite history in Eastern Europe changed dramatically. Schur wrote that the finds pointed out that Karaites had settled in the Crimean Peninsula, and hence on Russian soil, earlier than the Rabbanites had and that Karaite history was more ancient than, and independent of, the general course of Jewish history (Schur 1992: 104). Before the new discoveries, the Karaites themselves believed that the first Karaite communities in the Crimean Peninsula had emerged about 400–450 years prior to Abraham

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<sup>35</sup> This is the first time the name Yitzhak ha-Sangari can be found in commentaries by Moshe ben Nahman on the book *Kuzari* by Yehuda Halevi (See Fedorchuk 5768 (2007/2008) <<http://ejc.org/page70/news13514>>, accessed 16 November 2016).

On Yitzhak ha-Sangari and Khazar conversion to Judaism, see Golden 1980; Dunlop 1954; Golb and Pritsak 1982.

See also the critical analysis of Yitzhak ha-Sangari in Shapira 2002–2003: 223–60.

<sup>36</sup> However, contemporary scholars argue that Judaism in Khazaria was Rabbinic. See Golb, Pritsak 1997/5757: 101–224 (Originally published in English in 1982).

Zvi Ankori wrote:

‘When viewing Jewish Khazaria from the vantage-point of Karaite literature, one would detect no sign whatsoever of a religious bond between the Karaites and the Khazars, let alone a recollection of common ancestral ties’ (Ankori 1959: 65, 79).

Moreover, some medieval Karaite scholars called the Khazars *mamzerim* (Hebrew: bastards); see Ankori 1959: 71–74.

See a critical analysis of the theory on the conversion of the Khazars into Karaite Judaism in Freund 1991: 33–42.

Harviainen highlights the fact that Rabbi Petahya (ca. 1180), who found ‘heretics’ in the Land of Kedar (contemporary southern Ukraine) who had not heard of the Talmud, had nothing to report about the Land of Khazaria when he visited it after Crimea (Harviainen 2003: 640). See details on the report above.

<sup>37</sup> To be exact, 111 in number, according to *Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy* 1844: 643.



Firkovich's time (see the 1795 and 1825 petitions mentioned above). The same version of the story that Karaites told to visitors coming to Chufut-Kale at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, showing them tombs dating back four hundred years.<sup>38</sup> Before Firkovich discovered the new artefacts, the only and most trusted (even today) written source that the Karaites possessed dated back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup> On the basis of this source, Zvi Ankori estimated that 'the beginnings of organised Karaite life in the Peninsula can be placed, at the very earliest, at some time in the latter half of the twelfth century' (Ankori 1959: 60; Schur 1992: 104).<sup>40</sup>

However, the material found by Abraham Firkovich referred to more ancient times than the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, his documents seem to testify that Jewish communities predating the Karaite presence professed a 'pure' Biblical, non-Talmudic form of Judaism (see below) and had been living there for a long time before Rabbinic Judaism appeared in the Crimean Peninsula. This meant that Karaite ancestors did not participate in Christ's crucifixion or in compiling the Talmud (Schur 1992: 119). Besides, the discovered documents suggested friendly relations between those ancient 'non-Talmudic' (i.e. non-Rabbinic) Jews in Crimea and the Khazars, a people who lived on the peninsula at that time and who, according to these document, had allegedly been converted to Karaite Judaism by a Karaite Jew named Yitzhak ha-Sangari, thus becoming Karaites (Schur 1992: 119). This conception was later called the 'Crimean Theory' (Ankori 1959: 58–64). While reference is made to a friendship between the ancient Jews-Karaites and the people of the Great Khazar

38 Before the activity of Firkovich, Karaites in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century believed that the earliest graves dated from the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thus, they had shown to the traveller Henderson a grave dating from 1244 C.E. (Henderson 1826: 312–314) and to Haxthausen one dating from 1249 C.E. (Hauxthausen 1847: 407). Considering the year of publication, Firkovich's finds were already known (Kiziliv 2003: 797; Kizilov 2000: 307–308).

39 The Karaite writer Aaron ben Joseph ha-Rofe (1250–1320) mentions that a calendar dispute that occurred between the Karaite and Rabbanite communities of Solhat (Eski Kirim, Crimea) in 1278 in his book *Sefer ha-Mivhar* (described by Aharon ben Joseph in *Sefer ha-Mivhar* 1835).

A fragment of a Hebrew text on the calendar dispute is available in Ankori 1959: 60, fl. 12;

See an English translation of the same fragment by Shapira 2002a: 24–37. See also Danon 1925: 294.

See also Kizilov 2003c: 123–140; Kiziliv 2003a; Shapira Dan 2003c: 709–729.

40 Although there are also some earlier references in the travelling descriptions of Rabbi Petahya from Regensburg in 1170–1180 (*Sibbub ha-rab Petahya me-Regensburg* 1904–5: 4.) and by the Armenian traveller (1820s) Efraim Deinard (Deinard 1878: 13–14, 64–65 – in Hebrew) to certain 'heretic' Jewish settlements in Crimea, which have never heard about Talmud. Thus, during his travels in the *Land of Kedar*\* c. 1180 — a land encountered before entering Crimea and present-day Southern Ukraine and which bordered with the *Land of the Khazars* — Rabbi Petahya did not find any Jews, only 'heretics' (*minim*):

He asked them:

'Why do you not believe in the words of the Sages (*hakhamim*)?' They answered: 'Because our fathers did not teach them. ... On the eve of Sabbath they cut bread and eat in the dark, and they stay in one place the whole day [sc. Sabbath] and they use only Psalms (*mizmorim*) as their prayers. And when Rabbi Petahya told them our prayer and the blessing after meals, it was right in their eyes.' And they said, 'We have never heard of the Talmud' (Translation by Harviainen 2003: 636).

(The original text can be found in *Sibbub ha-rab Petahya me-Regensburg* 1904–5: 4.)

\* [Most researches locate *Kedar* in the southern part of contemporary Ukraine. Schur believes that it was north of the Sea of Azov (Schur 1992: 103). Some locate it in the Caucasus, though (Schur 1995: 231). However, in the 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Karaites sometimes called Crimea the *Land of Kedar*, *Kedaria* (Mann 1935: 12–16; Danon 1927: 171)]

Some researches, such as Zvi Ankori, believe that the sectarians 'may have possibly been the earliest Karaite settlers in the region' (Ankori 1959: 62). Kizilov thinks that the references might have a kernel of truth historical memory about the Karaite arrival at Taurida during the Tatar conquest of the peninsula (Kizilov 2003: 123–124). Others tend to identify the sectarians with remnants of the Khazars because they had not heard of the Talmud before, but they liked the prayers (Schur 1995: 231).

Empire, such a friendship does not imply a Khazarian origin for the Crimean Karaites, as later scholars have suggested. Firkovich has never found mention of either a Khazar or a non-Semitic origin for the Karaites in any other source, such as his correspondence or his book *Avne Zikkaron* (Firkovich 1872). However, he emphasised that the Karaites are proper Jews who had not been spoiled by the Talmud. We may suppose that his collection of materials intended to underline the fact that people from such a great empire as Khazaria professed Karaite Judaism, which would show the grandeur of the Karaite religion (Kizilov, Mikhaylova 2005/2006: 38), and that the Karaites had had a friendly relationship with people of such a great empire. The Karaites, as the sources below demonstrate, willingly accepted such a theory because it glorified their history and made it appear more ancient.

Glorifying national history and searching for more ancient or glorious ancestors have been a part of many national movements. The Karaites were not the only people who ‘discovered’ great ancestors. Many peoples in the period of romantic nationalism engaged in a search for great ancestors. One of the numerous examples are the Lithuanian people. For instance, in 1843 Mickiewicz linked the Lithuanians to a lost tribe of Hindus and aligned the Lithuanian language with Sanskrit. He called the Lithuanian language ‘the oldest language spoken on the European mainland’. Eight years before Mickiewicz, the Lithuanian historian Narbutt also illustrated the connection between Lithuanian and Sanskrit. Narbutt and Mickiewicz, as well as Daukantas, all drew from the folk side of German Romanticism and the achievements of German scholars (Snyder 2004: 37–38).

Russian scholars of non-Karaite origin, who also attached special attention to the findings of the famous Karaite collector, interpreted references to the Khazar-Karaite relations in their own way. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

As Schur has pointed out, Firkovich’s views were obviously politically motivated and were intended to give a ‘scientific’ underpinning to the Karaite ‘National Movement’ of his day, and to give convincing answers to the questions posed by Governor-General Vorontsov. Moreover, his opinions and writings were used by the Karaites in their endeavour to distance themselves from Judaism and receive full civil rights from the Russian authorities (Schur 1992: 119).

## **New Interpretations of Karaite History According to Documents Found by A. Firkovich:**

### **First Articles in the Russian Press (1843–1844)**

The first articles, which interpret early Karaite history in Crimea in light of new sources (Firkovich’s findings and materials found as a result of ‘verifying’ the archaeological excavations

by Odessa Rabbanit Schtern in 1842<sup>41</sup>) appeared quite soon thereafter. They were published anonymously, though. The first of them was called ‘Jews-Karaites’ (‘Evrei-karaimy’ 1843, Part 1: 263–284), published in 1843. The second was ‘Old Jewish Codexes and Other Documents’ (‘Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy’ 1844: 640–649) and the third ‘The Jewish religious sects in Russia. The Karaites or Karaites’ (‘Evreiskie religioznye sekty’ 1846: 11–49) were published several years later.<sup>42</sup> In 1911, a shorter version of the article ‘Jews-Karaites’ (1843) was reprinted in the Karaite periodical *Karaite Life* (*Karaimskaya Zhizn*) under the title ‘Where did Karaites Come from to Russia?’ (‘Otkuda prishli karaimy v Rossiyu?’ 1911: 46–52).<sup>43</sup> The anonymous article ‘The Jewish religious sects in Russia. The Karaites or Karaims’ was probably published by a well-known Russian Orientalist, who was still a young student at the time, Grigor’ev (1816–1881) (See the appendix ‘Biographies’). This is the general consensus since he republished an article with the same name and content later in the collection *Russia and Asia* (Grigor’ev 1876: 423–447) in 1876 (see details below).

The authors of the articles based their conclusions on the interpretation of the above-mentioned documents discovered by Firkovich: monument epitaphs and colophons to manuscripts (in particular to the *Madjalis* document), and his innovative Karaite chronology dating back to the creation of the world, which differed from the traditional Rabbinical chronology. The first students of Firkovich’s material did not doubt their authenticity (Fedorchuk 2007/2008).

First, it is important to note that the article ‘Jews-Karaites’ discussed a Karaite community that was of *a merely religious origin* (‘Evrei-karaimy’ 1843: 267). The author drew no conclusions about the Karaite ethnic distinction from that of other Jews. Using Firkovich’s sources, he deduced that the religious movement of the Crimean Jews (Karaites) had originated in Persia (Babylon) and not in Palestine, where Talmudism had originated. Thus, he wanted to bring into focus the fact that the Karaites were free from the influence of Rabbinic Judaism. He concluded that Crimean, Lithuanian, Volyn and Halicz Karaites had a common origin and were descendants of a particular Jewish group, which had separated from the others already before the Babylonian Captivity (‘Evrei-karaimy’ 1843: 280). Referring to the oldest monument mentioned in Firkovich’s collection, dating back to 640 CE, the author decided that they had come to the Black Sea region from Persia through the Caucasus as early as the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century (‘Evrei-karaimy’ 1843: 271–273, 276–277). In his opinion, they had started speaking their ‘Tatar language’ while in southern Russia (‘Evrei-karaimy’ 1843: 280). Referring to the monument of Itzhak Sangari, the author concluded that Itzhak

41 The results were published in ‘Evrei-karaimy’ 1843: 263–284 and in ‘Drevnie Evreyskie Kodeksy’ 1844: 640–649.

42 According to A. Kunik, the author of the article ‘Evrei-karaimy’ was a Russian literary critic and the nation’s first ethnographer, N.I. Nadezhdin (1804–1856) (see the appendix ‘Biographies’), one of the first members of the scientific society for the study of southern Russia, *Odessa Society for History and Antiquities* (*Odesskoe obschestvo istorii i drevnostei*). (A reference to Kunik in Fedorchuk 2007/2008. [Online]. Available at <http://eajc.org/page70/news13514> (Accessed: 22.11.2013).

In the opinion of O. Vasil’eva, he was the author of both articles, ‘Jews-Karaites’ and ‘Old Jewish Codexes and Other Documents’ (Vasil’eva 2003: 45–53.).

43 Note that there is an incorrect reference in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* to Part 2 of *ZhMVD* instead of to Part 1.

Sangari himself had converted the Khazars to Judaism ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 280). Referring to the colophons, he also supposed that the Khazars had established synagogues in Crimea before Rabbinism had arrived there ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 278–279).

The author of the article 'Old Jewish Codexes and Other Documents' speculated that the Jewish population of Crimea before the 10<sup>th</sup> century 'was neither Talmudists, nor Karaites, but just Jews who did not know any other source but the Bible' ('Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy' 1844: 645). That was why when Talmudists arrived at the peninsula no earlier than the 12<sup>th</sup> century they supposedly found there only non-Talmudic Jews ('Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy' 1844: 645). The article 'Jews-Karaites' surmised that when Rabbinism reached the peninsula, the local Jewish communities opposed it in the form of Karaism, with a certain number of Jewish Khazars converting to it ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 279).

The authors of the above-mentioned anonymous articles speculated about the Khazars, the most influential people on the Crimean Peninsula at the time living in close proximity to a Karaite-Jewish community in Solhat, according to A. Firkovich's sources ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 279; 'Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy' 1844: 646). The authors speculated that the semi-nomadic Khazars could only have converted to non-Talmudic Judaism, and not to Rabbinism, because Rabbinism would have been too difficult for them to ascribe to given their history and culture ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 279; 'Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy' 1844: 646). The article 'Old Jewish Codexes and Other Documents' specified that none of the Khazars could have converted to Karaism either because it had even more restrained rules than Talmudism ('Drevnie Evreyskie kodeksy' 1844: 646).

The articles of 1843–1844 arrived at their conclusions solely based upon Firkovich's materials. They speculated about the early settlement of non-Rabbanite Jewish communities on the peninsula and about the non-Talmudic (probably also non-Karaite) character of Khazarian Judaism in Crimea. However, the articles neither mentioned the ethnic background of the Karaites nor the supposed ethnic merger between the Crimean Jewish communities and Khazars.

However, the authors of the later articles (Grigor'ev, Kondaraki, Smirnov) developed the idea further, speculating on the ethnic origin of the Crimean Karaites.

It is also worth mentioning that the articles showed, in general, a positive image of the Karaites in Russian society. Later, Karaites would use this positive description of their communities (as well as earlier travellers' descriptions) to construct their identity (see Chapter 5).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> The author of the first two articles expressed a positive attitude towards the Karaites:

'...only their old men have beards, but they [Lithuanian Karaites] dress like locals, i.e. Poles... They are doing mainly gardening, some trading... All of them are doing well as owners, notable for their education and politeness; their manners resemble those of local nobility' ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 264–265) (my translation).

'All Karaites of Novorossiia are more or less doing well. Some are even wealthy' ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 266).

The reason for such a positive attitude by Russian society towards the Karaites was most likely because of the fact that the Karaites were non-Talmudic Jews. This fact was emphasised by each of the authors of the above-mentioned articles ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 281; 'Otkuda prishli karaimy' 1911: 50); the Karaites thereby escaped the moral and civil humiliation faced by the Rabbanite Jews ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 281; 'Otkuda prishli karaimy' 1911: 50).<sup>45</sup>

### **First Assumptions about the Khazar Origin of the Karaites**

A well-known Russian Orientalist named Vasiliy Grigor'ev (1816–1881) (see the appendix 'Biographies') was probably the first person to suggest that the Crimean Karaites were not Jewish by their ethnic origin (or were Jewish only in part), but were instead descendants of Turkic Khazar proselytes. As I mentioned above, he supposedly published his first article 'Jewish Religious Sects in Russia. Karaites or Karaims' anonymously in 1846 ('Evreyskiya religioznyya sekty' 1846: 11–49). Thirty years later, he republished it in the collection volume *Rossiya i Aziya* (1876: 423–447). Grigor'ev based his conclusions on Firkovich's material, with the proviso that the materials are authentic, and on his own anthropological observations of their physical appearance and language.

Grigor'ev did not find any Hebrew words in the 'the Tatar dialect' of the Crimean Karaites.<sup>46</sup> Hence, he concluded that their ancestors were not Jews. Based on his anthropological observations on the physical appearance of the 'Russian' (i.e. Crimean) Karaites, he judged that they did not have such an apparent 'Jewish kind of face', which always helped non-Jews in recognising an 'Israelite' (i.e. a Jew). On the basis of the two arguments above, Grigor'ev made the historically crucial conclusion (for the construction of Karaite identity) that the Russian Karaites had either mixed considerably from a genetic standpoint with certain Turkic peoples a long time ago, or, which he found more probable, were not Jews at all, but descendants of the Turks-Khazars, who professed the Law of Moses and had lived in Crimea from the 8<sup>th</sup> until the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries ('Evreyskiya religioznyya sekty' 1846: 30–31; 1876: 434–435).

Later, despite the authenticity of Firkovich's documents being called into question, Karaite ideologists referred to Grigor'ev's conclusion (as he was an established scholar) to support their theories about the non-Semitic origin of the Crimean Karaites (see parts 5 and 7).<sup>47</sup>

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'They are more sociable, honest and friendly [than Rabbanites]. They willingly adapt to the customs and traditions of the peoples among which they live... The authorities testified before the Government about their kind morality, impeccable honesty and exemplary diligence. None of them was ever [sic] caught in any serious crime, nor guilty of the intention to lead Christians or Muslims astray from their religion. ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 281)

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The reasons for Karaites' high moral can be different, but at least half of their good traits result from their adherence to the spirit of Biblical teachings and because they saved themselves from the destructive influence of Talmudic absurdity and Rabbinical fanaticism. ('Evreyskiya religioznyya sekty' 1846: 49)

46 The Karaim language was often confused with the Tatar language in early research.

47 Nathan Schur put forward the following arguments against a Karaite-Khazar linkage:

Thus, since no earlier article has been found, we can consider Grigor'ev to be the first scholar to have suggested a mixed Khazar-Semitic or even a non-Semitic ethnic background for the 'Russian' Karaites in 1846.

A year later, in 1847, a book by the German orientalist Carl Friedrich Neumann was published in Leipzig. He referred to the German traveller J. Kohl's (Kohl 1841: 260, 262, 270) idea that the ancient Khazars were the ancestors of the Karaites since the Karaites professed a special branch of Judaism, lived in the southern Russia as well as in the former Polish lands, spoke Turkish and resembled Turks in the construction of their body and facial features:

Reste dieses Volkes, namentlich der zum Mosaismus sich bekennenden Abtheilung, sind die Karaim im südlichen Russland und den ehemaligen polnischen Ländern, welche türkisch sprechen und auch in Körpergestalt und Gesichtszügen den Türken gleichen. (Neumann 1847: 125).

We should note here that previously, in the 'pre-Firkovich period', only a few pieces of evidence can be found on the Karaites' own views about their ethnic origin in the reports of travellers (Kizilov 2000: 310). Kizilov, who studied the topic, wrote that neither the Karaites nor scholars in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries had given much systematic thought to the origin of the Karaites. The traveller E. Henderson wrote that the Karaites were a people of Jewish origin who had appeared in Crimea in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Henderson 1826: 312–319). The English traveller Guthrie put forward the hypothesis that the 'Karay Jaodi or black Jews', i.e. Karaites, had originated from a Scythian tribe of Melanchlaeni (black cloaks). At the same time, she thought that the Karaites were one of the lost tribes of Israel, isolated from European curiosity by Turkish politics (Guthrie 1802: 83–84). As Kizilov wrote, Karaites of the 'pre-Firkovich period' did not mention anything about their origin dating back to the time of the Khazars in any written sources, including traveller accounts (Kizilov 2000: 310).

Kizilov also mentioned that as late as 1825, the Russian diplomat and playwright A.S. Griboedov (1795–1829) had travelled around Crimea. Visiting the Karaite community in Chufut Kale, he asked the rabbi: Who were those people from the south? The rabbi only answered, 'Khazars who were formerly called Goths'.<sup>48</sup> If the Karaites had considered the Khazars to be their ancestors at the time, the rabbi would have said more about them and Griboedov would have definitely mentioned his words (Kizilov 2000: 310).

### **Karaites and Khazars in the *Universal Description of Crimea* (1873)**

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1) A complete lack of interest in the Khazars in contemporary Karaite records.

2) So far, no archaeological remains have been found that support such a linkage (Schur 1992: 103).

48 Original text:

‘Чуфут-гора одна из меловых белых гор между Салгиром и Касикли-Узенем, подобно как Тепе-Черкес-Инкерман и Мангуп, и все они пещеристы. Кто этот народ и против кого окапывался к югу? Раббин говорит: хазары, которые прежде назывались готфами’ (Griboedov 1959: 441).

A few decades after publication of the first article by Grigor'ev, the amateur Russian historian Vasiliy Kondaraki (See the appendix 'Biographies') put forward a hypothesis about the Turkic origin of the Karaites in several chapters on the Khazars and Karaites in his collection *Universal Description of Crimea (Universal'noe opisanie Kryma 1873)*, which was a guide to the history of Crimea from ancient times to the present.<sup>49</sup> He based his conclusions on Firkovich's documents and visual observations. In contrast with Grigor'ev, Kondaraki assumed that although the Karaites had a 'similar eye shape to [sic] Jews', all of their other features, such as body structure and temper, totally differed from those of the Jews. Hence, Kondaraki concluded that we should not consider the Karaites to be descendants of either the Israelite tribes of Simon or Dan or any other Israelite tribe solely based on their Jewish religion (Kondaraki 1873: 7).

Kondaraki added his own assumptions about the story of the Madjalis document. He assumed that the Crimean Karaite Jews had converted the Khazars to Judaism in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. He also assumed that the Jewish Khazars had adopted the name *Karaim*, which in his opinion meant *Kara-iman*, i.e. it had to do with the Turkic black religion (Kondaraki 1873: 8),<sup>50</sup> even though we know that the name has a Hebrew origin. Later Karaite ideologists of the 20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> centuries, e.g. Yu. Polkanov, would refer to his conclusion on the term *Karaim* when discussing Karaite identity. Kondaraki also tried to explain 'the Jewish eye shape' of the Karaites, speculating that the first Khazar proselytes ethnically merged with Jewish communities in Crimea. Moreover, his conclusion about the non-Semitic origin of the Karaites, like that of Grigor'ev, was based on his belief that Karaites did not know 'the Jewish language'. The author ignorantly thought that the Karaites had never even known Hebrew since they had been speaking Turkic 'since the Khazarian times' (Kondaraki 1873: 8–10). Additionally, Kondaraki pointed out the similarity between the Karaite and the Tatar languages, as well as their shared traditions and friendly relationship.

Kondaraki's contradictory attitude toward the Karaites is interesting. It may reflect Russian society's attitude toward the Karaites in general. On the one hand, he copied very positive travel accounts on the Karaites (see Part 5 of this study), noting how others had found the Karaites to be cheerful, serious, honest, peaceful, clean and family oriented, as opposed to the Jews (Kondaraki 1873: 10–12). On the other hand, a few pages later he accused the Karaites of allegedly being ungrateful to the Russian state.<sup>51</sup> The Karaites were in fact very grateful to the Russian emperors for

49 It was later reprinted in St. Petersburg in 1875 (Kondaraki 1875). See also the later and more complete edition (Kondaraki 1883).

50 Kondaraki was not the first to think that *Karaim* meant black religion. Many travellers of the 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries thought that the name *Karaim* derived from the Turkic word *qara* — black; therefore, they referred to them as the 'Black Jews' (Guthrie 1795—1796 as cited in Kizilov 2003: 794).

Later, a Karaite named Yu.D. Kokizov also disagreed with Kondaraki concerning the name of Karaites. He denied that the name *Karaim* derived from the Kazarian word *kara-iman*, as Kondaraki had supposed, and that the modern Karaites originated from Khazars with the same name because the word *Karaim* was of Semitic origin (Kokizov 1900).

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'The Russian state granted them benefits to help them integrate better into the state and to make them feel gratitude. However, in reality they continued to live in isolation and did not want to adopt the customs of Russian society; they treated Russia as a country where they could make a profit, but they felt disgusted by the locals. They turned their minds to Israel as if it was their true Motherland [here, Kondaraki again

all the benefits granted. S.A. Beim even translated the national Russian anthem ‘God Save the Tsar!’ into Hebrew. The Karaites sincerely and enthusiastically sang it in kenassas (Kizilov 2011: 138). Perhaps, Kondaraki’s negative attitude toward the Karaites was common at that time in a similar vein as the negative attitude of Russian society toward the Tatars and Turks, who were seen as ‘an image of the enemy’.

Although Kondaraki was an amateur scholar, his more confident manner of expressing his opinion in comparison with Grigor'ev's suppositions probably reflected a view that was already fixed regarding the Turkic ethnic background of the Karaites among Russian scholars.

### **Livanov's Entry on the Karaites in his Crimea Travel Guide (1874)**

In 1874, a Russian writer who was also an officer in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ph.V. Livanov, wrote an article about Karaites in a guidebook for travellers. In it, he briefly discussed their ethnic origin (Livanov 1874). This article has typically been neglected by subsequent researchers. Although the article was mostly a repetition of earlier material, it also included a few of the author’s own conclusions. In the article, Livanov stated that the Khazars had converted to *Karaite Judaism*.<sup>52</sup> Discussing the ethnic origin of the Crimean Karaites, he copied Grigor'ev's conclusion (1846), though (without making reference to where he had found it) that the Karaites did not have a typical ‘Jewish face’. However, whereas Grigor’ev had doubts about whether the Karaites were originally Jews and had mixed with the Turkic Khazars later (‘Evreyskiya religioznyya sekty’ 1846, 30–31; Grigor’ev 1876: 434–435), Livanov confidently stated that the Karaites were originally Jews, but had then first mixed with certain Turkic peoples and later mixed with the Crimean Khazars (Livanov 1874: 22).

Livanov based his conclusion mostly on Grigoriev's speculations. Grigoriev was the first scholar to speculate on the non-Semitic origin of the Karaites. He based his conclusions on the recent (at the time) and sensational material discovered by Firkovich regarding the Karaites’ ‘Tatar language’ (later the Turkic language of the Karaites would become one of the most important arguments for supporters of the Turkic theory on the origin of the Karaites) and on the basis of his visual observations of the physical appearance of the Karaites (‘Evreyskiya religioznyya sekty’ 1846: 30–31; Grigor’ev 1876: 434–435). Although the materials upon which this conclusion was

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contradicts himself, writing about the Jewish traditions of the Karaites – D.M.]. On the other hand, they liked the Tatars and adopted their customs and traditions. In general, the Karaites resembled the Tatars in all details of their daily life to the extent that even someone who initially believed in their Jewish origin would have hesitated in maintaining such a belief after studying all of their customs and traditions [D.M.], or else would think that they had lived close to the Tatars for a long time [D.M.], although they had isolated themselves in the mountains’ (Kondaraki 1873: 10–12) (my translation).

52 Referring to a book by a Karaite rabbi named Solomon Beim called *Pamyat’ o Chufut-Kale* 1862, Livanov wrote that a Khazar king named Bulan had consulted with a Jewish wise man, who was indeed the Karaite Yitzhak ha-Sangari from Chufut-Kale, with a request to interpret his religious dream (described in the Khazar Correspondence). Because of the religious dispute between representatives of the world religions, Bulan allegedly decided to convert to Karaite Judaism (Livanov 1874: 15-16).



based were questioned later, the well-established reputation of the scholar have done its part: his opinion was repeated and strengthened by Karaite and non-Karaite scholars for many decades to come.

### **Vasiliy Smirnov's theory about the 'Khazar-Karaite Symbiosis' (1890)**

The Russian scholar and well-known specialist in Turkic studies Vasiliy Smirnov contributed another important article on Karaite origins, written as an introductory chapter, (See the appendix 'Biographies') for the *Collection of the Old Official Documents and Statutes of the Russian Empire Concerning the Permissions and Status of the Russian Subjects Karaites*, edited by Abraham Firkovich's son, Z.A. Firkovich, in 1890.<sup>53</sup>

Smirnov as well as earlier scholars and the Russian administration were impressed by the unusual combination of Old Testament religion and the Turkic vernacular by the Karaites (Smirnov 1890: VII). He believed that the fact that the Khazars used to speak Turkic and had professed the Law of Moses could not be a mere coincidence (Smirnov 1890: XI–XII). Additionally, he could not believe that 'such a great people as the Khazars could absolutely disappear, whereas they have played an important role in international affairs just 1000 years ago' (Smirnov 1890: XI–XII).

Smirnov argued for the ancient origin of the Karaite language (in comparison with, e.g. the Tatar language) since the Karaite-Turkic language contains many Turkic archaisms unlike the modern Tatar language. For that reason, he believed that the Karaites had adopted the language from people living in the Crimean Peninsula before the Tatars (he definitely meant the Khazars, which is evident from his conclusions). Another argument he made was that the Karaite grave monuments of the pre-Tatar era, i.e. the time of the Khazars, found by Firkovich had Karaite names of Turkic origin, although he did not specify what the names were. He supposed that the Karaites were the product of an ethnic merger between Old Testamentary', i.e. non-Talmudic, Jews with Khazars. The scholar offered the theory of a 'Khazar-Karaite symbiosis'. According to the theory, the Khazars had converted to the Karaite religion, and the Karaites, in turn, had borrowed the Turkic language from the Khazars, thereby creating a religious and linguistic unity. However, the more numerous and politically more powerful Khazars had probably assimilated the Karaites (Smirnov 1890: XII).

Smirnov suggested that the name of a religion sometimes becomes the name of the people who profess such a religion. That is why, in his view, it was not surprising that the Karaites had always called themselves 'Bnei-Israel'; other peoples called them 'Judeans', which is 'Yahudiler' in Tatar and Turkish and 'Żydzi' in Polish. Hence, in his opinion their name came from an incorrect

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<sup>53</sup> Introduction by Smirnov to *Sbornik starinnykh gramot i uzakonenii Rossiiskoi imperii kasatel'no prav i sostoiianiia russko-poddannykh karaimov*. (Ed. Firkovich, Z.A. ). St. Petersburg, 1890.

association with their religion, which is similar to how Russians used to call all Europeans *Germans* (Немцы) (Smirnov 1890: XII–XIII).

Smirnov, Kondaraki and Livanov published their articles more than 40 years after Grigor'ev's first article, but until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century their tone of expressing their opinions on the Karaites' Turkic origin sounded more confident than Grigor'ev's initial hypothesis and probably reflected a view that was already fixed regarding the Turkic ethnic background of Karaites among Russian scholars.

Another author of that time who argued for the Turkic origin of the Karaites was M.F. **Shugurov** in his article 'History of Jews in Russia' (Shugurov 1894: 129–181). Shugurov based his opinion on the Turkic appearance of the Karaites and on the fact that the Khazars (who were called Eastern Turks by the Byzantines in the 7<sup>th</sup> century) had owned the larger part of Taurida (Crimea) since the 8<sup>th</sup> century. He did not believe in the Jewish ethnicity of the Karaites:

there is not any Jewish trait in the physiological features of the Karaites. To be sure, it is worth reading a description of [them] by Karl Koch in *Die Krim und Odessa* (1854).<sup>54</sup> (Shugurov 1894: 179) (my translation)

The author concluded that the Karaites did not have anything in common with the Jews, although he did not rule out the fact that the Karaites could have originated from Jewish tribes:

However, the Karaites by their physiological and moral features most likely did not have anything in common with those Jewish tribes *from which they originated*. Nevertheless, they [people in our country] are often confused them with Jews, restricting their rights, which were established by law for Jews. (Shugurov 1894: 179) (my italics, my translation)

Russian scholars, as well as Orientalists and Turkologists, were all heavily influenced by Firkovich finds, the Karaite Turkic language and their Tatar appearance, concluding that the Karaites were not Semitic, but of a Khazar or mixed Semitic-Khazar origin. They argued that the Khazars not only had had contact with ancient non-Talmudic Jewish communities in the Crimean Peninsula, but had also merged with them genetically. Consequently, modern Karaites were of a mixed Khazarian/Turkic-Semitic origin. Such a belief became so fixed in the minds of Russian scholars that, for instance, Shugurov did not even believe in the Karaites' claims that they were of

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'Residents if Chufut-Kale surprised me by their appearance: their faces and bodies differed essentially from our Jews. Although they were not tall, they were not thin either. They were not long-headed. There was nothing Jewish in their full round faces, which were marvellous by their lacking of sharp features. The Jewish nose is big; on the contrary, Karaites have noses of a size that is even smaller than average. ... Their mouth was very small; the chin barely protruded. Although Karaite's head hair was black, it was not so coarse as Jews have. The Karaite beard is thin. Remi characterized the Karaites similarly, suggesting that they resembled Turks more than Jews' [*Zur Volkskunde der Juden*. 91-94] (Koch 1854, as cited in Shugurov 1894: 179-180).

Further Koch also described the positive moral behaviour of the Karaites and compared it with the bad reputation of Jews-Talmudists.

Semitic origin. Thus, they unintentionally paved the way for the Karaites' reconstruction of their identity.

### Anthropometrical Research

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, researchers engaged in the new scholarly discipline of anthropology paid particular attention to the Karaites. Their works played a significant role in the discussion of Karaite identity.

To help answer the question of the origin of the Karaites, *Karaimskaya Zhizn* presented the most comprehensive work of anthropometrical research on the Karaites to date. It published the results of a study on the Karaites of Elizavetgrad, which was carried out by the well-known anthropologist Samuel **Weissenberg**<sup>55</sup> (1904: 66–75; 1912: 38–56). The editorial board of *Karaimskaya Zhizn* (i.e., S.S. Raetskiy) emphasised the impartiality of Weissenberg's study. Raetskiy pointed out that although the scholar was a Rabbinical Jew himself, he supported the theory of the Turkic origin of the Karaites, which, in his own words, was usually questioned, in particular, among historians of Jewish origin.

Weissenberg was convinced that the Karaites had clear 'Tatar features' (Turkic) in their appearance, but he was not sure about the reason. He supposed that some of the Rabbanite Crimean Khazars (he considered Khazars as originally Rabbanites, unlike the Karaites<sup>56</sup>) had converted to Karaism. However, he supposed that later intermarriages between Karaites and Crimean Tatars were the more likely reasons. He knew that the Karaite religion prohibited mixed marriages. However, he qualified that it was difficult to trace whether or not such intermarriages had occurred. As I have mentioned above, Sinani, who was a Karaite, wrote that the Karaites married foreigners at the beginning of the Tatar period (Sinani 1888).

For his studies, Weissenberg took anthropological measurements of the Karaites of Elizavetgrad: their head index, the shape and colour of their face, the colour of their hair and 'the hand-swing index' (which refers to the length of a hand-swing in the process of walking).

Furthermore, Weissenberg compared the measurements for the Karaites, Jews and Bashkirs. He took the last group because they were the most easy to reach Turkic people in the Russian Empire. He believed that they were an ill-defined branch of the Turkic people, though. In his findings, he concluded that the Karaites could be placed between the Jews and Bashkirs from an ethnic standpoint.<sup>57</sup> According to Weissenberg, despite the clear Tatar features, which were most

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<sup>55</sup> See the appendix 'Biographies'.

<sup>56</sup> However, an editorial in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* referring to Konstantin Ikov's article on the anthropology of the Karaites (Ikov 1887: 369–389, as cited in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* 1912: 41) argued that it is a proven fact that the Khazars had converted to Karaite Judaism. However, they did not support the statement with reference to any source.

<sup>57</sup> According to Weissenberg, the Karaites were close to the Bashkirs because of their brachycephaly and because of the shape of their face: skew eyelids and prominent cheekbones and because of 'some other traits which were barely

visible in Karaite children, Jewish facial traits could still be recognised in the Karaites. For example, he pointed to a 'salient Jewish type' with a typical big nose and mouth and to a significant hairiness of the faces and bodies of both Karaites and Jews ('Antropologiya karaimov' 1911: 18).

Weissenberg concluded that Karaites were offspring of two peoples, Jews and Tatars. He also considered that other peoples had also played a part in the 'ethnogenesis' of the Karaites because he found few dolichocephalics and blondes among the Karaites ('Antropologiya karaimov' 1911: 18).

It is interesting to note that a few years later, Weissenberg wrote that Krimchaks (Crimean Rabbanites) could never have differed ethnically from the Karaites; the only distinction had to do with religion (Weissenberg 1912/1918, 38–56, as cited in Freund 1991: 44).

Although the methods that Weissenberg used were primitive by comparison with the methods used in modern anthropology, post-soviet Crimean Karaite authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries often referred to his work, which is why it was important to mention it in this study.

The same article in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* also published the results of a study by another anthropologist, Professor Julian **Talko-Hryniewicz** from the University of Krakow (See the appendix 'Biographies'). He examined the Karaites from Troki (Lithuania). Like many others, he believed that the Karaites had moved to Lithuania from Crimea with Vitold (see the next chapter). Therefore, Talko-Hryniewicz decided to check whether the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites retained any of the typical features of their Crimean brethren. Since he did not have suitable human research subjects available, he had to compare the Karaites with the Halhas (Mongols), Buryats and Tunguzs. In Talko-Hryniewicz's opinion, some traits of the Karaites resembled more those of Jewish people and other – Turks. Nevertheless, the author concluded that the Karaites were more or less homogeneous in appearance, unlike the Jews, who could have been either blonde or dark.

It is important to note that Firkovich had also touched on the question regarding the anthropological typology of the Karaites in *Avne Zikkaron*, and thus he maybe generated some discussion on the issue at that time. He wrote that it was enough to look at Karaites to understand that they were not like their Jewish brethren; they were not similar even to Karaites from Constantinople, Egypt and Jerusalem. He also referred to a certain scholar, Grigoriy II, and his book *Classification of Religions*, in which Grigoriy II wrote about the anthropological differences between Karaites and Jews (as cited in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* 1912: 86). However, it is not clear who Firkovich was referring to when using the name Grigoriy II.

Later, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, many Karaite writers began referring back to Samoylovich (1924), who had summarised previous anthropometric and linguistic works by Weissenberg, Ikov, Talko-Hryniewicz and Grzegorzewski (Grzegorzewski 1915: 11–12;

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visible in their appearance'. The investigated Karaites differed from Jews more by brachycephaly and their narrower and darker faces, with a predominance of black and straight hair ('Antropologiya karaimov' 1911: 18).

and his later work, Grzegorzewski 1916–1918: 252–268). Samoylovich wrote about a close connection between the Karaite language and the Kipchak-Cuman-Polovets language in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The author produced an argument for a cultural-historical connection between the Karaites and Krymchaks based on the names of Karaite and Krymchak weekdays, which reflected Muslim, Christian and Jewish traditions that existed in Khazar lands at the time. This argument was later taken up by the Polish Karaite Turkologist Ananiasz Zajączkowski and his followers (See Chapter 5 of this study).

Anthropometric and anthropological research at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century played a significant role in the Karaite ‘National Movement’ at that time. Many Karaite authors at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and up to the present have referred to the studies mentioned here (see two next chapters).

### **Summary of the First Period of the Karaite National Movement in the Russian Empire from the Middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> until the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

To sum up, the preconditions for the Karaite ethnocultural emancipation from Jewishness appeared at the very end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They first appeared in the Austro-Hungarian Empire when Maria Theresa gave Karaites equal rights with the Christian citizens of the country in 1774, and then with the first successful Karaite petitions in the Russian Empire starting from 1795. However, the actual beginning of the Karaite proto-national movement in Eastern Europe can be dated to the establishment of the Karaite Consistory in 1837 and the discoveries of A. Firkovich in the 1840s. The discoveries showed the history of the Crimean Karaite communities (and connected with them, according to the Karaites themselves and other scholars of the time, Polish-Lithuanian Karaites) to be much older than, and independent of, Rabbanite Jewish history. The discoveries stimulated interest among the Karaites in their history. This will be discussed in the next chapter. Even earlier than the Karaites themselves, Russian scholars became excited about Firkovich’s discoveries to a great extent because they were related to the ancient history of southern Russia (Taurida had the most ancient history in the Russian Empire) and gave a new perspective on it. Russian scholars, but not yet the Karaites themselves, were the first to state in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the Karaites were not ethnically Jewish, but instead Turkic (Khazar), or else of a mixed Turkic-Jewish origin. Russian researchers played a significant role in the process of changing the Karaite identity. They drew their conclusion based on new historical discoveries by the Karaite scholar Abraham Firkovich. Both Russian scholars of the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Karaites themselves trusted the authenticity of the discoveries. However, Jewish scholars of the time claimed that they were forgeries. The first scholar who hinted at the Turkic or mixed Turkic-Semitic ethnic origin of the Russian Karaites was Grigor'ev in 1846. Then, other scholarly voices supported his

speculations. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, another established Turkologist, Smirnov, expressed the same view more confidently. Not only Firkovich's findings, but the Karaite Turkic vernacular, their Tatar clothes and their way of life also influenced the conclusions of Russian researchers and travel reporters. On the other hand, Karaite Judaism and their knowledge of Hebrew religious texts also influenced outsiders' observations (see Grigoriev's conclusions above). Anthropometric studies by non-Karaite scholars of the time seemed to speak of a Karaite Turkic origin, too. Firkovich's sources and the studies of Turkologists and anthropologists prompted a Karaite response to the sources and academic studies and launched a period of, as Hroch called it, 'academic interest', which can be seen as a first phase, 'Phase A' (according to Hroch's periodisation – see Final Discussion in this study), of the Karaite 'National Movement'. We can consider the Karaite petitions, the establishment of the Karaite Consistory in 1837 and Firkovich's archaeological and collecting activities in the 1840s, which were all studied in this chapter, as key to the Karaite ethnocultural emancipation from the Rabbanite Jews and the beginning of the Karaite proto-national movement.

## **Chapter 4. The Karaite Response to the Russian Scholarly Articles and Reconstruction of Karaite Ethnocultural Identity in the Russian Empire in Publications from the Middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

This chapter, after providing a brief historical overview, will analyse the Karaite response to research on their ethnic origin by non-Karaites, which I discussed in the previous chapter. Their response reflects the gradual development of a Karaite identity. For this chapter, I collected the Karaite responses from several newspapers and books on Karaite history by Karaite authors from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, my sources mainly come from two Karaite periodicals of that period: *Karaimskaya Zhizn* [Karaite Life] (published in Moscow, 1911–1912) and *Karaimskoe Slovo* [Karaite Word] (published in Vilnius, 1913–1914). These are the most important sources that could be found on the reconstruction of a Karaite identity for this period. As my analysis is based on printed material only, it reflects the opinion of some of the Karaite intelligentsia, but it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of most Karaites at that time.

### **Historical Overview: National Policy in the Late Russian Imperial Period**

In order to better understand the development of a Karaite national identity, we need to look at it within the context of the political and historical circumstances of late Imperial Russia.

The first version of Russia as an ‘imagined community’, to use the terminology of Benedict Anderson, was based on a religious mission (Hosking 1998: 286). Peter the Great and his successors tried to create a secular myth to supplant it, one nourished by Russia’s size and diversity, its armed forces and its high culture and learning. This new myth entailed fostering a secular and Europeanised culture, together with creating an education system to sustain it among the empire’s elites (Hosking 1998: 286).

Russia before Peter the Great was only a people (*narod*): she became a nation (*natsiia*) thanks to the impetus supplied by the reformer. (PSS vol 5: 124 as cited in Hosking 1998: 286)

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the industrialisation process in Europe gave rise to modern nation-states, which gradually became the norm throughout Europe. Those places that did not immediately fit the pattern, the Habsburg, Ottoman and Russian Empires, became relatively weaker and were threatened with disruption and possible dissolution (Hosking 1998: 316). Russia’s disgraceful defeat in the Crimean War (1853–1856) testified to the backwardness of the country’s industry and

communications and the precarious condition of its finances; the authorities confronted mounting peasant discontent and an urgent need for radical reforms (Hosking 1998: 315). Hence, the regime under Alexander II (who reigned from 2 March 1855 until his assassination on 13 March 1881) initiated reforms to bridge the gap between the elite and the rest of the people and to move Russia closer to becoming a nation-state (Hosking 1998: 319). His first civic strategy was to create institutions that would enable the various social and ethnic groups to articulate and defend their interests and participate in the political process. Thus, the creation of *zemstvos* in 1864 and municipal councils in 1870 gave Russia for the first time a proper network of elective local government assemblies (Hosking 1998: 319). The second strategy for change was an ethnic strategy: to try and bring the people and the empire closer together by making Russians more conscious of their national identity and non-Russians more like Russians. That was the policy pursued intermittently by Alexander II and more consciously by his two successors, Alexander III and Nicholas II (Hosking 1998: 319).

In the later decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russia's first mass-circulation newspapers were published. This was an important development because *obshchestvennost'* became an autonomous factor in public life, as information and ideas about issues of domestic concern and international politics began to spread beyond a relatively narrow circle of officials and oppositional intellectuals and reach a broader segment of the public: at first professional people, then increasingly literate shopkeepers, employees and workers (Hosking 1998: 332). In Hroch's terminology, this was 'Phase B' of the development of a new national awareness: 'the period of patriotic agitation' (Hroch 1985: 23). Only, because of the restricted nature of politics in Russia, it was not politicians but a relatively small group of writers, editors and journalists who projected a picture of what it meant to be Russian (Hosking 1998: 332).

Alexander II's policy of trying to bind the regime and elites closer together through the creation of a civil society had failed — or, at the very most, it had been only partly successful — and in the process it had created new dangers to internal order. The obvious alternative was to replace a civic policy with an ethnic policy to bolster political cohesion by promoting identification with the nationality whose name the empire bore, i.e. the Russian nationality (Hosking 1998: 367). The alternative policy of Russification was introduced at the first sign of crisis, during the Polish rebellion of 1863–64 (Hosking 1998: 367).

Russification was in part a continuation of the policies that Nicholas I (r. 1825–1855) had pursued: administrative centralisation and the elimination of local privileges and other anomalies (Hosking 1998: 367). Now, however, there was a major new element: the attempt to inspire among all peoples of the empire a subjective sense of belonging to Russia, whether by the habit of using the Russian language, through reverence for Russia's past, its culture and traditions, or through conversion to the Orthodox faith. This kind of Russian-ness did not necessarily imply abandoning altogether a localised non-Russian identity. Most practitioners of Russification saw Russian identity



as overarching, not destroying other ethnic (or ‘tribal’, as they called them) loyalties (Hosking 1998: 367).

The strict policy of Russification at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, accompanied by the acceleration of industrialisation and secularisation of Russian society, in fact provoked strong opposition — the nationalisation of the liberation movements along the national borders of the empire (Bezarov 2015: 10). In this context, it is understandable why Lithuanian Karaites, living in an environment where many were advocating a national liberation movement for Lithuania or Poland, had a stronger national identity than did Karaites in the central parts of Russia, e.g. Crimean Karaites in Moscow (see more in the chapter ‘National Romanticism’).

## **What Karaites Had to Say about Their Identity and Ethnic Origin**

### **Reformatory and De-Judification Tendencies among Karaites in the 1870s**

Two anonymous Karaite reformatory articles were published in the Russian newspaper *Novorossiyskie vedomosti* in 1870. One of the articles, ‘Neskol'ko slov o karaimakh’ [Few Words About the Karaites], suggested abolishing the celebration of Purim, because it was a Jewish tradition. The author of another reformatory article, ‘Koe-chto o karaimakh’ [Something About the Karaites], stated that the Karaite religion, Judaism, and the Karaite clergy who support it were the main reasons for the backwardness of the Karaites. The Karaite people, in his view, were inseparably connected with Russia and, therefore, they should have live in unity with Russian people, rather than standing apart from them. However, according to the author, this was only possible by getting rid of the influence of Judaism and of its clergy. The author was also quite sceptical of the holy language of the Karaites and of the system of its teaching as well as outdated notions, in his view, found in the Bible. Referring to *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (1846),<sup>58</sup> the author stated that the Karaites were not Jews. That was why they did not have to adhere religiously to Judaism, which belonged to the Jewish people. He proposed several reforms: to substitute the teaching of religious law in Hebrew for Russian, to close Karaite *midrashim* and allow Karaite children to study in schools providing a general education, to abolish all religious festive traditions, which constrained freedom of action of the Karaites, to discard religious restrictions on food, to pray in Russian in order to understand one’s prayers and to cease remaining apart from other peoples and thereby seeming backward (‘Koe-chto o Karaimakh’ 1870: 66).

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<sup>58</sup> In fact, the article was published in *Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennih Del* in 1846, not in *Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*. Moreover, it was a copy of the article ‘Evreyskiya religioznyya sekty’ from 1846, apparently written by Grigor’ev anonymously (see details above in this chapter).

To the best of my knowledge, these two newspaper articles from 1870 are the earliest evidence of the beginnings of a process of de-Judification of the Karaites. The fact that they were published in a Russian newspaper, and not in a Karaite newspaper, also reflects the character and aim of the message to reform or even abolish old-fashioned Jewish traditions and to become more integrated with Russian society. The authors felt the Karaite conservative religion to be a burden not appropriate (in their opinion) to life in a ‘progressive’ society. They associated the Karaite religion and traditions either with backwardness or with ‘Jewishness’, which they wanted to get rid of. The most interesting fact for this study is that one of the articles stated that the Karaites were not Jews. The authors were probably young secularised Karaites. We do not know the extent to which the authors' views were supported or opposed in Karaite society (I have not found any feedback on these articles). From the articles, we know that there was opposition to such a reformatory and de-Judification stream of thought among the Karaite religious clergy. However, the articles show that anti-Jewish and de-Judification tendencies started in Karaite society no later than the 1870s.

### **First Seraya Szapszał Publication on the Khazar Theory (1896)**

One of the first Karaites who strongly supported the Khazar theories at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was then a young Karaite named Seraya Szapszał (1873–1961),<sup>59</sup> a person who later played a key role in the formation of the Karaite Turkic identity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His conception of the Khazar origin of Karaites became firmly established in Karaite literature after Szapszał was elected to the office of *hakham* in Taurida and Odessa in 1915–1917 and then assumed the post of Polish-Lithuanian *hakham* in 1927 (Kizilov 2011:143; Kizilov 2009) (See next chapter). But at that time, Szapszał published his ideas in the brochure ‘Karaimy i Chufut Kale’ [Karaites and Chufut Kale] in 1896 when he was a student of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University (Szapszał 1896).

First of all, he regretted that people still continued to judge the Karaites on the basis of their religion, in other words, considering them to be Jews and ignoring their way of life, language and [anthropological] type.<sup>60</sup>

In his article, he pointed out the main arguments for why the Karaites were ethnically distinct from the Jews. He would develop such arguments later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well.

His first argument had to do with the Karaite physical type. He referred to Grigoriev's anonymous article ‘Evreyskiya religioznyya sekty’ (1846: 30–31), claiming that the Karaites lacked a ‘particular Jewish kind of face, which always had allowed recognising [sic] any Israelite from a person of any other nation’ (Szapszał 1993: 13).

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59 On the biography and activities of Seraya Szapszał, see Kizilov 2009a; Kizilov 2002: 255–273; Shapira 2002; Petrov-Dubinkiy 2007: 64–78; Prokhorov, Kizilov 2008: 396–400; Shapira 2008. See the appendix ‘Biographies’.

60 Szapszał 1896, reprinted in Szapszał 1993.

His second argument had to do with the Karaites' Turkic language, which, according to him, the Karaites had not adopted from Tatars, but had spoken before any contacts with the Crimean Tatars (Szapszał 1993: 13). Szapszał referred to Smirnov (Smirnov 1887; Smirnov 1890) and his discussion of archaisms in the Karaite language. He also referred to *Avne Zikkaron* by Firkovich (1872: 211), with Firkovich allegedly having found copies of Karaite inscriptions in the Turkic language on graves in Mangup dated from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Smirnov had also mentioned the existence of such inscriptions in Turkic. However, they remained unknown to other scholars (see the previous chapter). Referring to Firkovich's (1872) and Chwolson's (1884: 467) works, Szapszał listed the Karaite Turkic names of the pre-Tatar period, such as Bakhshi or Bakshi, Tokhtamysh, Bikeche, Mamuk and others on graves dating back to 413–821 CE (Szapszał 1993: 14).<sup>61</sup> Chwolson wrote that the Karaites had used Turkic names at least starting from the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Chwolson 1865: 46–47).<sup>62</sup>

Szapszał's final argument was that Karaites had not married other peoples during those centuries. However, referring to the Russian writer Smirnov (1890), Kondaraki (1873 and 1875), Livanov (1874) and a Karaite named Sinani (1888), he noted that there had 'occurred a complete [ethnic – D.M.] assimilation' between Karaites and Khazars (Szapszał 1993).

Szapszał was most likely the first Karaite who implicitly and completely supported ideas about the Khazar role in the Karaite 'ethnogenesis' and the complete assimilation of both peoples. He based his opinion on Firkovich's materials and on earlier conclusions found in works by Russian scholars. It is not known if there were other Karaites at that time who supported theories on the ethnic merger of the Khazars with the Karaites. Sinani, for instance, wrote that the Karaites married foreigners. However, he did not specify who they were (see next section of this chapter). Szapszał ideas became very influential later.

### **Karaite Supporters of their Semitic Origin, as the Russian Scholar Shugurov Testifies**

Despite the fact that all Karaite authors totally supported the authenticity of Firkovich's sources, in contrast to the above-mentioned Russian scholars, not all Karaites accepted the Russian scholars' theories on their ethnic origin at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Not all Karaite writers started rethinking their ethnic origin or were ready to give up their Semitic identity and claim a Turkic origin for their people at the time.

We find evidence on the Semitic identity of the Karaites in an article by a Russian writer Shugurov 'History of Jews in Russia' (1894), mentioned in the previous chapter. The author stated

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61 Chwolson indeed mentioned these names found on monuments in Chufut-Kale. See Chwolson 1865: 116, 309, 488–507.

62 However, Samoylovich and other scholars disputed the notion that the names on the monuments were no older than from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Samoylovich 1924: 208).

that a Turkic origin for the Karaites was first proposed by scholars, but most Karaite intellectuals did not accept such a notion at first:

Some scholars, Neumann (1847) for instance, consider the Karaites to be descendants of the ancient Khazars; but the Karaites themselves by all possible means, oral traditions, documents and antiquities, *tried to defend their Jewish origin...* According to Rabbi Solomon Beim, his people had settled in Crimea already before the destruction of Jerusalem... Few descendants of Annan ... consider themselves to be true Jews. (Shugurov 1894: 178) (my italics and translation)

The earliest evidence of Karaite insights into their ethnicity and identity can be found in the works of four Karaite authors from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Solomon Beim (1862), Isaak O. Sinani (1888), Yu.D. Kokizov (1900) and S. Prik (1902). As Phillip Miller wrote, they ‘reflect the outlook and values of their author’s generation and provide the literary basis upon which subsequent generations of Eastern European Karaites based their identity’. (Miller 1993: 51, ref. 2).

A Karaite *hakham* named Solomon **Beim** (1819–1867)<sup>63</sup> supported Firkovich’s sources, interpreting them in his book *Memory about Chufut-Kale* (1862) in a similar way as the above-mentioned Russian researchers. But he made an important stipulation that he did not consider the Karaites to be descendants of the Khazars. He stated that the Crimean Karaites had always had an oral tradition about their early settlement on the peninsula, but they could not disclose it to the general public because it lacked a clear argument and supporting evidence. That is why, according to him, when the Karaites talked about their origin, they were usually criticised by non-Karaite scholars, who had another view on the matter and linked them to the Khazars, Sadducees, Sofets and others (Beim 1862: 22). However, in Beim’s opinion, the situation had changed when Firkovich found the old Jewish manuscripts (meaning the Madjalis Scroll in particular),<sup>64</sup> which supported the oral tradition.

Like the first articles by the Russian authors, the Karaite Solomon Beim also believed that those ancient Crimean Jewish communities that had settled in Crimea before the destruction of the Second Temple had not heard about the Talmudists until Rabbanites sent their missionaries to the peninsula.

Just like the above-mentioned Russian scholars, Beim concluded from Firkovich's findings that Yitzhak ha-Sangari had converted the Khazars to ‘pure Judaism’ in approximately 200 BC;<sup>65</sup> and that the Khazars had established synagogues in Crimea with the help of the ancient Jewish community living there. Beim also pointed out that those Judeans, i.e. Karaites, borrowed the language and many female names from the Khazars because they lived a long time in the same neighbourhood (Beim 1862: 25).

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<sup>63</sup> See the appendix ‘Biographies’.

<sup>64</sup> The Madjalis document, the manuscript from Karasubazar and the manuscript from Chufut-Kale were all discovered by Firkovich in 1840 (Beim 1862: 28).

<sup>65</sup> Beim referred to the translation of the manuscripts found by Firkovich into Russian at the end of his book (Beim 1862: 28).

Thus, having based his opinion on Firkovich's findings and referred to the close relationship between the Karaites and Khazars and their non-Talmudic Judaism, Beim strongly opposed the idea of a Khazarian ethnic origin for the Karaites. He only mentioned that the Karaites had borrowed Khazar female names.

More than two decades later, another Karaite, Isaak **Sinani** (1888), was sure that in spite of the doubts voiced by the Karaites' enemies, 'the stones' found by Firkovich showed clearly that Karaite settlement of the Crimean Peninsula was very ancient. Sinani was convinced that a new-born science, palaeography, would have confirmed the matter (Sinani 1888: 94). In contrast to the other mentioned authors, Sinani was silent about the Khazars, but he noted an interesting detail that after the Tatar invasion of Crimea, the Karaite community experienced intellectual stagnation during the ensuing period of hardships, and hence they married foreigners, being unaware of the Karaite religious law, which prohibited that (Sinani 1888).

The Karaite Solomon **Prik** (1902) also supported Firkovich's findings and the theory of the ancient settlement of the Karaites of the peninsula (Sinani 1888: 94). But he did not discuss the Khazars.

The Karaite scholar Yu.D. **Kokizov** analysed Firkovich's sources more carefully and wrote on the history of the Karaite settlement of the Crimean Peninsula (Kokizov 1900). But Kokizov denied that the Karaites were direct descendants of the Khazars. He considered this assumption to be absolutely groundless:

Karaites have never been Khazars and they do not descend from them, but they have always existed independently as a particular people. (Kokizov 1900: 13) (my translation)

He only emphasised the friendship between the Khazars and Karaites:

The truth is only that both peoples existed in solidarity and mutual sympathy, which is supported by the old manuscripts from the Imperial Public Library. (Kokizov 1900: 13) (my translation)

His view is close to Firkovich's view. However, despite his argument that the 'Karaites were never Khazars', Kokizov was also tempted to state that the remnants of the Judeo-Khazars were included in the Karaite community and had merged with them completely and assumed the name Karaites (Kokizov 1900: 13, ref. 14 to Lerner 1867). Therefore, Kokizov took a controversial stand. On the one hand, he believed that Karaites were Jews and had never been Khazars and had always existed as a distinct people. On the other hand, he repeated the statements of the Russian scholars that the Judeo-Khazars had genetically merged with the Karaites.

Kokizov drew his conclusions about the arrival of the Karaites on the Crimean Peninsula also based on the Madjalis Scroll. He supposed that they had come from Asia through Persia and the Caucasus, where they had borrowed a Turkic language and Turkic and Persian names (he referred to the Karaite grave monuments of the first centuries CE). He maintained that it was not a one-time-only arrival, but that they had come to Crimea earlier than had the Khazars and Tatars, before more arrived with the Tatars again later. But as they were a people small in number, they often joined with certain larger groups of people during such migrations (Kokizov 1900: 7, 15).

To sum up, all of the above-mentioned Karaite writers on the one hand fully supported Firkovich's findings about ancient Karaite settlements in Crimea. But on the other hand, two of the four Karaite writers examined here did not mention the Khazars and their role in the Karaite 'ethnogenesis' at all, which means that they did not even think about the Khazars as of Karaite ancestors. The other two did not believe that the Karaites were Khazars. Kokizov in particular did not believe the assertion that the Karaites were descendants of the Khazars, but supposed (probably under the influence of the findings and statements by Russian scholars) that the Khazars could have merged with the Karaites.

This means that the Karaites did not initiate theories about the Khazar ethnic background of the Karaites; rather, Russian scholars did. Moreover, not all Karaites were ready to accept the new theories about their ethnic origin at the time. Hence, their ethnic identity was not a Turkic-Khazarian identity, but Semitic one at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

### **The Karaite Periodical *Karaimskaya Zhizn***

The periodical *Karaimskaya Zhizn*<sup>66</sup> (published in Moscow, 1911–1912) provides us with a good selection of material for studying the self-identity of the Karaite intellectual elite. The representations of Karaite self-identity found in the periodical has not been previously studied to the extent done here. The periodical was dedicated to all aspects of Karaite social activity, such as community activities as well as economic, religious, cultural, and historical manifestations. The journal contains historical articles about the Karaites as well as discussions on problems with their activities for the period during which the periodical was published. Both Karaite and Russian authors were welcomed to publish their articles in the journal (Nashi zadachi 1911: 4–8).

It is important to note that *Karaimskaya Zhizn* testifies to the fact that at that time, the Karaites of the Russian Empire had not separated themselves from the other Karaite communities of the world yet. Although the journal mainly published articles on the Karaite communities living in various cities and provinces of the Russian Empire, it occasionally published news regarding communities in Jerusalem, Egypt and Turkey (Nashi zadachi 1911: 4–8).

In one introductory article, the editor noted the problem that not all Karaite communities supported the idea of the publication of *Karaimskaya Zhizn*. Some of them, especially representatives of the Crimean Karaites (who were not named), opposed the idea of publishing a Karaite national<sup>67</sup> (национальный) journal. They worried that it could cause a great deal of harm to ‘some particular Karaite national interests’ of their people by showing certain exceptionally personal issues to outsiders (Nashi zadachi 1911: 4–8). They did not want ‘to wash their dirty linen in public’. The editorial blamed them for their tendency of national isolation and secrecy. It did not specify what they were afraid to disclose. Maybe it related to the discussions regarding Karaite ethnic belonging, which could harm their special status and benefits in Russian society. On the other hand, advocates for publishing *Karaimskaya Zhizn* accused the Crimean opposition of pretending to take the role of the official protectors of the Karaite people. In their opinion, the historical past of the Karaites and their modern lifestyle did not demean the community. On the contrary, they believed that a national journal had to ‘show the former power of the people and its rich historical past’ (Nashi zadachi 1911: 4–8). Furthermore, they were convinced that the history and current activities of the Karaites were interesting for general Russian society. Russian society knew only very few and often distorted facts about the Karaites because of their isolation (Nashi Zadachi 1911: 6).

The editors of *Karaimskaya Zhizn* emphasised the educational role of the journal: even Karaites knew too little about themselves because of scarce material on their history, archaeology, anthropology and ethnology and because ‘what non-Karaites wrote about Karaites was not always true’ (Nashi zadachi 1911: 6). On the other hand, as stated in one foreword, works of Karaite authors in Hebrew are lost for the people, because Karaites of Eastern Europe forgot the language

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<sup>66</sup> Saduk S. Raetskiy was the chief editor and Isaak Sinani was a journalist and a publisher – see more in the appendix ‘Periodicals’.

<sup>67</sup> See a discussion on the term in the theory chapter of this study.

of the Bible. As a consequence, a lack of knowledge of their own history caused further disintegration of the people (Nashi Zadachi 1911: 7). The editorial appealed to ‘national self-consciousness’ (*национальное самосознание*) in order ‘to unite Karaites into one family and to publish a true history of Karaites’ (Nashi Zadachi 1911: 7–8). This appeal echoed the spirit of nationalism.

### **Supporters of Semitic Background According to *Karaimskaya Zhizn***

The question of the origin and ethnic belonging of the Karaites in the Russian Empire was discussed already in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* in the article ‘Antropologiya Karaimov’ [‘Anthropology of the Karaites’] (1911: 17–29), published by the editors of the journal (i.e. by Saduk Raetskiy). The article mentioned two groups of scholars who represented opposite viewpoints on the origin of the Karaites. One group of scholars argued for a pure Semitic origin of the Karaites. Another argued for a Khazar origin. The article mistakenly attributed the authorship of the theory on the Khazar origin of the Karaites to Firkovich. Although, as I mentioned before, Firkovich himself had not proposed the ‘Khazar theory’. The theory relied on the Madjalis Scroll version of settlement of the Karaites in Crimea and the earlier conclusions of Russian scholars regarding the assimilation of the Turkic Khazars with the Karaite Jews.<sup>68</sup> Raetskiy supported a theory that the ‘Karaites are not Israelites [i.e. Jews], but descendants of the Khazars who escaped to Crimea after the Russian prince Sviatoslav has defeated the Khazarian kaganate in the 10<sup>th</sup> century’. However, in order to support the theory, he referred to anthropological studies from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Weissenberg and Talko-Hryniewicz, who supported the Turkic origin of the Karaites (see previous and next chapters).<sup>69</sup> The editorial board emphasised that it did not support any opinion on the origin of the Karaites, and therefore they only published scholars' conclusions. However, we can conclude from the following words that Raetskiy was a proponent of the theory regarding their Jewish identity:

We have rejected views, dictated by narrowly understandable patriotism and by a tendency to separate themselves [Karaites] from Semitism. (‘Antropologiya karaimov’ 1911: 18) (my translation)

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<sup>68</sup> Remember that Smirnov was the first who made this supposition, but there was no reference to him.

<sup>69</sup> A Russian academician named A. Kunik (1876) wrote that it would be too bold to assume a Khazar origin for the Karaites because of a lack of historical facts. He also saw a resolution of the riddle when comparing the crania of Karaites with the crania of Polish Jews. However, such anthropometric studies were far from resolving the riddle (for instance, see Ivanovskiy 1904: 173, 185, 202, 237; Ivanovskiy 1911: 343, 388, 457. See also works by Ikov, Weissenberg and Talko-Hryniewicz below.).



At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many Karaites still considered themselves to be Jews, as examples from *Karaimskaya Zhizn* will show below. Thus, based on a lecture by a Karaite scholar named A.I. Katyk given to local Karaites in Melitopol we can see that the Karaites did not make much of a distinction between themselves and Jews at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Katyk supported 'a conservative view' on the matter, noting that a difference between Jews and Karaites is only mentioned in certain religious traditions: in terms of the celebration of the Sabbath and a few other holidays. He also mentioned that the Karaites had made a significant contribution to Hebrew grammar because they had dedicated much time to thinking about the exact meaning of the Bible. He emphasised that despite the fact that 'now we speak old Tatar (under the influence of the current political environment), it has already lost its main features of Asian origin' ('Khronika tekushchey zhizni' 1912: 84).

Karaite I.I. Kazas<sup>70</sup> anonymously wrote an article for a French academy, at the insistence of the academicien de Baye, in which he did not deny the Semitic roots of the Karaites. First of all, Kazas stated that the name 'Karaim' derived from the Hebrew word *qara* – 'to read' (Obshchie zametki 1911: 37).

He argued that since the Karaite people had lost their political independence a long time ago (he probably meant the exile of the Jewish people) and had been living in a host territory and had even discontinued speaking the language of their fathers (i.e. Hebrew), naturally they had to keep religious traditions as the only 'national' (национальный) marker (Obshchie Zametki 1911: 38).

As for the date when the Karaites had settled in Crimea, he was probably the only Karaite author of that time who doubted the authenticity of the inscriptions on the grave monuments that Firkovich had dated as pre-Christian. However, he did believe that the monuments' inscriptions dated back to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries and concluded that the Karaite settlement of Crimea in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries can thus be considered a proven fact ('Obshchie zametki o karaimakh' 1911: 47).

Kazas took the view that the Karaites were the descendants of the Khazars as scientifically unfeasible. He argued that there were still Levites and Kohens, descendants of Aaron, among the Karaites, which could only be found among descendants of the ancient Israelites. He highlighted the fact that Karaites did not have any legends or folklore about the Khazars, which would have referred to their historical connection to the Khazars. In his view, it seemed impossible that all people could completely forget their ancestors, who were powerful and had previously occupied the territory where the Karaites has also lived. However, in trying to explain the difference in physical type between Jews and Karaites, which anthropologists had long suggested (see the previous chapter), he assumed that the Karaites had married Khazars. Therefore, he decided that the Karaites were not pure Semites, but he cautioned against identifying them with the Khazars, which would have been, in his view, a very bold hypothesis ('Obshchie zametki o karaimakh' 1911: 49). He,

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70 Karaimskaya Zhizn. Izbrannye stat'i zhurnala *Karaimskaya Zhizn* i drugie interesnye stat'i o karaimakh. [Online]. Available at <http://goo.gl/OzKMxl> (Accessed: 12. 2013).

therefore did not accept the Turkic theory of the Karaites' origin completely, but also, as with many other Karaites, he was influenced by authoritative Russian scholars and anthropologists in his conclusions about a mixed Khazar-Karaite ethnic origin ('Obshchie zametki o karaimakh' 1911: 68).

Another argument pointing to the Jewish identity of the Karaites of the Russian Empire in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* noted close relations between the Karaites of the Russian Empire and those of Egypt still at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, Cairo Karaites followed the Karaite Congress in Evpatoria with interest. After the congress, certain educated Karaites proposed an idea of uniting Karaites throughout the world into a special international association. They also thought it would be good to have one common religious head, a common *hakham* (Hebrew: sage), for Karaites throughout the world (Ibn Iehuda 1911: 105).

Another example is a Sevastopol Karaite named E. Troitskiy, who wrote that Karaites living in Russia, Austria, Turkey and Egypt consisted of one undivided nation (*национальность*) ('Iz Chitatel'skikh' 1911: 110).

One other argument was that some Karaites still mentioned Israel as their historical motherland and called themselves 'sons of Israel' (which is a religious term) in the pages of the journal (see, e.g. a poem Losafatova Dolina 1911: 32; Brachnyy Akt 1911: 84).

The above-mentioned examples from the writings of Katyk, Kazas and Troitskiy on the association of Russian Karaites with other Karaites worldwide and regarding Israel as a homeland show that there were a number of Karaite intellectuals at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who strongly associated themselves with Jewish culture and did not regard the Karaites as descendants of the Khazars.

### **Supporters of Turkic Theories in Karaimskaya Zhizn**

In contrast to the above-mentioned Karaites, some Russian Karaites supported theories on their Turkic origin in the pages of *Karaimskaya Zhizn*. Thus, an anonymous Karaite, writing under the pseudonym *Ne-orientalist* [Non-Orientalist], spoke of the Orientalist scholar Smirnov as a friend of the Karaite people and as a defender of a Khazar theory of Karaite origins ('Yubiley prof. V.V. Smirnova' 1912: 95).

Another example is the publication in a press review of *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, in which a comment by the editors of the Russian newspaper *Utro Rossii* [Morning of Russia] argued that the Karaites are, according to Firkovich, of Khazarian origin ('Sredi pechaty' 1911: 55).

Besides the few articles mentioned above (including articles on the anthropology of the Karaites), there was no propaganda on the Turkic origin of the Karaites, probably because of the Semitic self-identification of the editorial board or because of their impartial approach.

### **National Self-Consciousness in the Pages of *Karaimskaya Zhizn***

The Karaites called themselves a nation (*karaimskaya natsiya*) in the pages of *Karaimskaya Zhizn* (see a discussion on the terms nation, nationality, and so forth, in Chapter 2). Saduk Raetskiy, the chief editor of *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, called the periodical ‘a national printing organ’ (*‘natsional'nyy pechatnyy organ’*) and the Karaites ‘a small people’ (*malenkiy narod*) (Raetskiy 1912: 67), although, maybe not for the first time, the term ‘natsia’ was a common term for ‘people’ in the Russian Empire at that time (see, for instance, ‘K statistike karaimov’ 1911: 30).

One Russian author, a certain Marikin, on the eve of *hakham* elections noticed in a newspaper named *F.T.* that regardless of the small number of the Karaite *natsia*, they were a group with national interests (*natsyonal'nye interesy*) and the right to national (*natsional'nyy*) self-determination (*‘Karaimy i pechat’* 1912: 74).

Another example of national self-consciousness on the pages of *Karaimskaya Zhizn* was an article called ‘Natsional’noe samosoznanie’ [National self-consciousness] by the above-mentioned Karaite D. Kokizov. He discussed the fact that the Karaite people had not developed a strong national consciousness as other peoples had (*‘Natsional’noe samosoznanie’* 1911: 24–25). He noted that various subordinate peoples who had lost their political independence in the remote past still had a strong national consciousness (*natsional’noe samosoznanie*) already in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He supposed that one reason why the Karaites did not have a strong national consciousness had to do with a lack of initiative on the part of the intelligentsia. In his opinion, that was due to the fact that the Karaites had equal rights with the local population. He noted that later, when a sense of national consciousness and national self-determination gained ground in the Russian Empire, it only needed an appropriate impulse to spread among the Karaites too. In the author’s opinion, such an impulse occurred at the last Karaite National Congress in Evpatoria in November 1910 when the Karaite intelligentsia received inspiration to help develop a national consciousness among the Karaites. In the congress, they elaborated the following ideas: to initiate a general statistical investigation of the Karaite people; to replace the everyday ‘backward’ Tatar dialect with ‘the civilised’ Russian language; to reunite the western and eastern Karaites of Russia; to foster the sense of a common connection among Karaites throughout world (here is the argument again that the Karaites of the Russian Empire had not separated themselves from Karaites in other parts of the world at the time); to initiate a publication on the history of the Karaites; and to begin publishing the Karaite periodical *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, which would become ‘a powerful conductor

of all kinds of cultural ideas from intelligentsia to less educated centres' [of the Karaite life – D.M.] ('Natsional'noe Samosoznanie' 1911: 24). Kokizov assumed that all these tasks and the results of the congress would have been developed and would have strengthened the national self-consciousness of the Karaites. In his opinion, the rise of a national self-consciousness among the Karaites was evident ('Natsional'noe samosoznanie' 1911: 24–25). He also agreed that the Karaite National Congress of 1910 in Evpatoria was the most important expression of their national aspirations ('Natsional'noe samosoznanie' 1911, 24–25).

Before the Karaite National Congress took place in Evpatoria, a Karaite group of students from Moscow had already raised the issue of a lack of research on the Karaites and the importance of conducting such research: anthropological, statistical and ethnographical. They noticed that they were witnessing an increase of interest in national issues ('natsional'noe sushchetvovanie') among the Karaite people. This increasing interest was explained by a willingness of the Karaites to save such a small people (*narodnost'*) from the threat of extinction (Sultanov Moscow 1911: 87).

Kokizov proposed replacing the Crimean Karaite 'Tatar language' with the Russian language. He said that the question of changing languages had already been raised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He maintained that there were no historical facts that the Tatar language was the native language of the Karaites. He reminded that the savage Tatar hordes had captured and ruled the ancient Karaites and, under those circumstances, the Karaites replaced their native Biblical language with the Tatar language. Now, Kokizov offered to help replace the 'backward Tatar language with the civilised Russian [language]' (Kokizov 1911). In other words, Kokizov regarded the Hebrew language as the native language of the ancient Karaites and did not consider the Crimean Karaite Turkic language to be an important part of Karaite identity, as did later authors. We can speculate that these kinds of ideas could have appeared in the minds of the Crimean Karaites (vs. the Karaites of the western provinces of the Russian Empire) because their Crimean Karaite language was Tataricised to a great extent. However, when the Tatar environment receded into the past, the Tataricised Karaite language was no longer helped smooth the way to the new 'progressive' Russian environment. On the contrary, the Karaites of Lithuania and Poland had always regarded the Karaite language as their distinctive feature and an instrument for their national renaissance. This could have been explained by the historical fact that language became associated with identity among the border populations of the Russian Empire (the territories of modern-day Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and other countries). Thus, we may suppose that the Lithuanian and Polish Karaites were affected by these influences (Jonikas 1989).

The editorial board replied to the author that it was not necessary to resort to any artificial arrangements to replace Tatar with the Russian because this substitution was already occurring gradually in a natural way at that time (Kokizov 1911).

In a way similar to that of the anonymous author of the reformatory articles in *Novorossiyskie vedomosti* (1870), Kokizov argued that not only the Turkic language, but also the

ceremonial side of the Karaite religion, restrained intellectual development and the development of a national self-consciousness among the Karaites (Kokizov 1911a: 23). However, his opponent, a certain M.I., did not agree with Kokizov that the Karaite religion was guilty of backwardness. He argued instead that the problem rested solely with the Tatar influences ('Iz chitatel'skikh' 1911).

Kokizov considered it a task of the Karaite intelligentsia to develop the national self-consciousness of the Karaites. He proposed quite progressive actions for achieving this result. First, he advocated a lively exchange of collective views on all issues of national consciousness. Such an exchange was possible, in his view, at congresses with the participation of Karaites from all countries. Second, he recommended bringing up issues of national consciousness in the pages of *Karaimskaya Zhizn*. Third, educating the younger generation was key, meaning a reform of Karaite schools (because the youth preferred Russian schools to the Karaite religious schools). Fourth, the author also proposed substituting their religion for a general moral codex because not only Karaites, but also other peoples, were experiencing a decline in religious practices. Fifth, he suggested reforming the way of life of the Karaites (Kokizov 1911: 23, 32).

Kokizov's propositions were very secular and in the spirit of their time. He was for replacing religious self-consciousness with a national one. At the time, a decline of religion and seeing it being replaced by a national ideology was common (see the theoretical part of the work). But renouncing one's religion also harboured a thread of assimilation. In contrast, 'western' Karaites had never supported the abandoning of religion. However, Kokizov's views did not necessarily reflect the opinion of the majority of Karaites.

Other national issues discussed in the pages of *Karaimskaya Zhizn* had to do with establishing 'national institutional bodies' to overcome the dispersion of the Karaite communities.

The chief-editor of the periodical, Saduk Raetskiy, proposed the idea of establishing special Karaite national clubs (*natsional'nye kluby*) to reinvigorate Karaite life and prevent people from becoming alienated from each other. In such clubs, Karaites would be able to gather and socialise together. The proposer of the idea insisted that new life environment demanded a way of socialising based on social and cultural organisations for the sake of instilling a sense of national unity. The author argued that such clubs could play a strong role in large cities, where Karaites were especially becoming disconnected from one another (Raetskiy 1911: 49).

Raetskiy warned that it was a time of national crisis (*natsional'nyy krizis*). The younger Karaite generation was becoming alienated from the rest of the people. They received an education in Russian institutes and were kept away from the old generation and traditions. In his view, they lacked a national (*natsiona'nyy*) flair. The national crisis was, in his words, also intensified by apathy among the intelligentsia with respect to promoting their national existence (Raetskiy 1911a: 67).

M.Sh. Fuki also warned that the Karaite ethnicity was becoming dispersed among the surrounding peoples, with them gradually losing their distinctive national features. However, in

contrast to Kokizov, he argued that the main reasons for this had to do with religious poverty and a lack of social cohesion and of social support. To favour religious and cultural revival, he suggested establishing a national fund (*natsional'nyy fond*) with educational and charitable purposes (Karaimskiy Natsional'nyy Fond 1911).

A Karaite named Chaduk-ben-Shimon wrote about the idea of establishing a national library (*natsional'naya biblioteka*) called *Caraimica* in Evpatoria. He was sure that it would play a role in the revival of a national self-consciousness (*natsional'noe samosoznanie*). Chaduk-ben-Shimon regretted that a number of Karaite guests to Evpatoria only took away memories of *chebureks*. He hoped that in the case of the existence of a national library, they would understand that the Karaites had not only culinary values, but also cultural wealth (Chaduk-ben-Shimon 1911: 57).

One contributor to *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, writing in relation to the elections of a *hakham* in Evpatoria in 1911, suggested that a national revival (*natsional'noe ozhivlenie*) had occurred among the local Karaites. The elections raised several national issues that were organisational in nature. A national self-consciousness was emerging and voices called for establishing new national-cultural centres, which would have cemented the national-religious revival and consolidation of a small Karaite people (Khronika 1912: 96).

Besides the fact that the topic of national consciousness was a fashionable one in Europe in that time, probably namely due to the threat of the dispersion of the Karaites among other peoples in the vast territory of the Russian Empire (about which S. Raetskiy, D.M. Kokizov and others wrote a lot) became an impetus for the development of a national self-consciousness among the Karaites at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which could help unite Karaites (Doklad 1911: 95). In contrast, before the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Karaites had lived in intimate contact in closed communities, but they later began moving away from one another in search of better possibilities, which threatened to break up contacts between the Karaites. The ideas of the Karaite authors to establish national institutional bodies was a sign of the existing national self-consciousness and 'National Movement' of Karaites in the Russian Empire.

## **National Romanticism in Vilnius: The Karaite Periodical *Karaimskoe Slovo***

### **Historical Background**

As a continuation of the general discussion on Romanticism presented in the theoretical chapter, here I will briefly discuss national romanticism (or romantic nationalism) — a political movement that arose in Europe together with Romanticism in other fields of expression — culture, religion, literature, art and music — in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Snyder 1990: 346). This form of nationalism emerged as a reaction to dynastic or imperial hegemony (Snyder 1990: 248, 346).

Politically, the Romantic interest in the past soon became linked with the rising national spirit. Romantics turned to history to seek evidence of ‘the national genius’ and ‘the national soul’. Scholars devoted their attention to the study of national laws, institutions and languages as a means of proving that their own national culture had its roots in the past. Nationalists were intrigued by many aspects of Romanticism — its enthusiasm for history, its stress upon the dignity of the common man/woman and its interest in bourgeois social aspirations. All of these became tenets of the emerging nationalist movements (Snyder 1990: 346). The early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw nationalism as a unifying force. Peoples who had long been split into hostile factions now began to see the virtues of unification. The movement began to spread throughout the world (Snyder 1990: 346).

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the success of Germans and Italians in forging national unity stimulated the enthusiasm of subject nationalities in other countries. National minorities in Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and other conglomerate states began to think in terms of independence. They emphasised geographical unity, a common language, a common culture, common traditions, a common history, sometimes even a non-existent ‘race’, and believed in the virtues of nationalism (Snyder 1990: 346).

By the turn of the century, national self-determination had become an assumption regarded as being progressive and liberal (Snyder 1990: 346).

Romantic nationalism and national revival movements (or national liberation struggles) thrived particularly in the Russian Empire<sup>71</sup>, where national minorities were seeking to safeguard their own identities in an effort to combat Russification (Snyder 1990: 407).

Consequently, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the border populations of the Russian Empire, i.e. peoples in the modern Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as Finland, Ukraine and Belarus, encouraged by reforms in the Russian Empire, began to assert their own sense of nationalism (Snyder 1990: 407).

Hence, a Lithuanian national awakening (*Lietuvių tautinis atgimimas*), a Belarusian national revival (*Беларускае нацыянальнае адраджэнне*), a Ukrainian national revival (*Український національний рух*), together with Ukrainophilia, and a Finnish national movement (Fennomania) all began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Let us briefly review the Lithuanian national awakening (in Lithuanian: *Lietuvių tautinis atgimimas*), which certainly impacted the Karaite communities living in Lithuania and affected their national self-consciousness.<sup>72</sup> After the Russian partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,

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71In Russia, however, Romanticism also contained a democratic element consisting of several general characteristics: 1) a reverence for art because it was believed to penetrate to the essence of human existence, something neither science nor reason could achieve; 2) the need for complete freedom from artistic dogmas and an admiration for nature; 3) heightened interest in the common people as natural artists and an interest in folklore; and 4) a special interest in discovering the crucial, decisive moments in human existence, meaning an exaggerated interest in national history (Tyrras 2010: 139).

72 Similar movements took place in Ukraine and later in Belarus. The territories of both modern countries had formerly been part of the Commonwealth (as well as Lithuania), but did not achieve independence until after the collapse of the

a major part of the Lithuanian territories belonged to the Russian Empire. Lithuania experienced a rise in romantic nationalism and other national revivals in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just as countries elsewhere in Europe did. The Lithuanian national revival was expressed in the form of increasing self-determination of the Lithuanian people, which led to the formation of the modern Lithuanian nation and culminated in the re-establishment of an independent Lithuanian state (Snyder 1990: 407).

Lithuanian nationalism was a reaction to both the Russification policies and to the threat of further Polonisation due to the historically dominant Polish culture in the area. To separate themselves from Polish culture, Lithuanian nationalists preferred the Czech alphabet over the Polish one. The Lithuanian language gained the attention of scholars (compare this with the attention shown to the Karaite language, discussed in the next part of this study) from the emerging science of comparative linguistics. The emerging national movement sought to distance itself from both Polish and Russian influences, and the use of the Lithuanian language was seen as an important aspect of this movement (similar to the role of the Troki dialect of the Karaite language). Language became associated with identity in Lithuania, as it did elsewhere in Europe. Thus, the Lithuanian national movement was based upon the Lithuanian language (Snyder 2004: 33).

It is important to note that the national revival began among young educated Lithuanian people engaged in higher education studies at universities in the Russian Empire and abroad. The Ukrainian and Belarusian national revivals had similar beginnings. The above-mentioned Karaite authors of the reformist newspaper articles of the 1870s and Szapszał were also students at Russian universities at the time. Many young Lithuanian nationalists were sons of wealthy farmers, i.e. they came from the peasant class, and thus were less affected by Polonisation. At first, a Lithuanian (as well as a Ukrainian, Belarusian and Karaite) national consciousness was confined mostly to the intellectuals, but it soon gathered momentum among the masses (Snyder 1990: 407). According to the printed sources that I use in this study, a Karaite national consciousness also emerged first among the Karaite intelligentsia.

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Soviet Union in 1991.



The Russian imperial decision to draw Lithuanian students to St. Petersburg rather than Warsaw created a new secular elite. The uneven de-Polonisation movement had an unintended nation-building effect, as Russian culture proved to be far less attractive to Lithuanian students than Polish culture had been. Lithuanian national activists saw the failed Polish national uprising of 1863 and believed that they could develop a better national strategy for themselves. Rather than armed revolts, this new generation paid attention to national culture (Snyder 2004: 31–32). The movement resulted in the publication of the Lithuanian newspapers *Aušra* (The Dawn) and *Varpas*, followed by the publication of poems and books in Lithuanian (Snyder 2004: 33–35). These writings romanticised the past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, depicting the nation as formerly a great power with many heroes (Snyder 2004: 32). To be Lithuanian, to their understanding, was to preserve the traditions of the Grand Duchy (Snyder 2004: 40). This influenced Karaite intellectuals as well. The Karaites romanticised their own historical past during the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and created an image of a national hero from the Lithuanian prince Vitold, who allegedly resettled some Karaites from Crimea to Lithuania. The Karaites created from him an image of their own national hero (see the next chapter of the study).

Yet even with a press ban imposed on the Lithuanian language by the Russian administration, literacy rates among Lithuanians continued to rise significantly; they had one of the highest literacy rates among all nations of the Russian Empire, being only behind that of the Finns, Estonians and Latvians. The political Lithuanian nation had already been formed by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Political claims were voiced in the Great Seimas of Vilnius, and political and cultural activity continued to grow after the press ban was finally lifted in 1904 (Snyder 2004: 34–35).

### ***Karaimskoe Slovo***

The appearance of nation-states in Europe put the problem of national issues on the agenda. In the Polish-Lithuanian territory, a movement for the preservation of the national consciousness of different European peoples and for the restoration of the nation was accompanied by a fight for national independence and for the restoration of the state. The movement was also accompanied by a spirit of national patriotism (Kobeckaite 2008: 266–268).

In Vilnius, a special atmosphere prevailed in which all national groups started to struggle with the idea of how to tap into the national consciousness and with the necessity of saving it. The spirit of nationalism in Vilnius also influenced the Karaites.

It is no wonder that the national (*natsional'nyy*) journal *Karaimskoe Slovo* [A Karaite Word],<sup>73</sup> which was 'saturated with a broad patriotic mood, especially in the enlightened circles of the local intelligentsia' (Kobeckaite 2008: 267), started to be published namely in Vilnius. As the

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<sup>73</sup> See details in the appendix 'Periodicals'.

Karaite author Halina Kobeckaite noted,<sup>74</sup> under the influence of the national-patriotic movements in Europe at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the national (*natsional'noe*) consciousness of the Karaites went beyond just religion (Kobeckaite 2008: 268). The Karaites started to feel themselves to be not only bearers of a particular religion, but also bearers of a particular national Turkic culture (Kobeckaite 2008: 268).

The periodical *Karaimskoe Slovo* was published in the Russian language in Wilno (Vilnius) in 1913–1914 and was aimed at all Karaites in the Russian Empire. Its chief-editor was A. Spakowski and its editor was Owadia Pilecki.<sup>75</sup> Unfortunately, publication of the journal was interrupted by the First World War.

*Karaimskoe Slovo* was imbued with progressive national ideas (nation, nationalism, national self-consciousness and national spirit, all had a positive patriotic meaning in the periodical) and appealed for a national (*natsional'nyy*) revival. Note that on the pages of *Karaimskoe Slovo*, (and earlier in *Karaimskaya Zhizn*) Karaites used the Russian terms *natsia*, *natsional'nyy* and *karaimskaya natsiya* (English equivalent for national and nation) not in terms of territory, politics or citizenship, but in terms of belonging to a particular ethnicity.

The first issue of *Karaimskoe Slovo* highlighted the development of a national self-consciousness (*natsional'noe samosoznanie*) and the rise of a national spirit (*natsional'nyy duh*) among the Karaites. The editorial board in the foreword article of *Karaimskoe Slovo*, in a way similar to that of *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, called upon the Karaite intelligentsia not to remain indifferent but to encourage revival of the Karaite nation (*natsia*) and to unite others for this purpose (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 1913: 1).

The authors of *Karaimskoe Slovo* appealed to the need to preserve the Karaite people, their unique characteristics and especially the Karaite language (in contrast to Kokizov's appeal in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* to replace the old-fashioned Tatar language with modern Russian) and religion (Kokizov 1911: 24–25; Kobeckaite 2008: 267–268).

In the first issue of *Karaimskoe Slovo*, in a foreword article on the Karaite community, the editors introduced a slogan for the journal suggesting that it should serve 'the development of the national self-consciousness, for cultural interests and as a means of knowledge' (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 1913: 1). The editors emphasised the importance of knowledge and culture because, in their view, the higher the education of the people, the stronger their national consciousness. That is why they appealed to all Karaites, regardless of their social status, to participate in educative work and to contribute to the growth of the national consciousness of their people. They wanted to rise the national spirit in a way that impacted all social strata (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 1913: 2).

Thereby, the editors invited Karaites to publish in the journal. They especially appealed to the Karaite intelligentsia to do so in order to keep people from falling away from 'Karaism'

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<sup>74</sup> See the appendix 'Biographies'.

<sup>75</sup> See more about the periodical in appendix 'Karaite Periodicals'.

(meaning Karaite culture in general), to facilitate the spiritual revival of the ethnicity and to unite in achieving the goal (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 1913: 2).

Karaite leaders also believed that one of the most important national aims was to teach Karaite children their native language (the most likely one would have been the Karaite language – D.M.) and the Holy Scripture, together with a love for their religion, and to teach them about their people and to be proud of their origin. However, they regretted that it was impossible to implement a compulsory comprehensive Karaite education for everybody because of a lack of funding. Another reason for the pervasive national spiritual impoverishment, in the opinion of the authors of the article, was a lack of communal solidarity and the indifference of some parents to educating their children in Karaite ways. That was why Karaite leaders called upon Karaite parents to pay more attention to children's Karaite education and to set up a national fund for that purpose (*natsional'nyy fond*) (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 1913: 3–6).

One example of the patriotic education of national self-consciousness (*natsional'noe samosoznanie*) of Karaites on the pages of *Karaimskoe Slovo* was the lullaby 'Jukla, uvlum' [Sleep, my son], which had been written earlier (in 1904) by an influential contributor to Karaite poetry, S. Kobecki (1865–1933) (Kobecki 1904). The song tells about a mother who taught her son to be a real Karaite: to be honest and to love people. She believed that she would be proud of him when he was older because he was the son of Karaites.

Another example of Karaite nationalism can be found an article by a Karaite named Ksenia Abkowicz in the first pages of *Karaimskoe Slovo*. She raised an important question: What would unite the Karaites? The language? She supposed that probably it was not the language because the younger generation did not speak Karaim anymore. Besides, there was hardly any literature in the Karaim language. Was it religion? She answered negatively again because mainly only the old people were still faithful, while young people were either sceptical of or indifferent to religious questions. She believed that there was something else that would united Karaites, despite their different social statuses and educational levels. Abkowicz speculated that this was something imperceptible – a sense of affinity with every Karaite:

'We kept a strong consciousness that we are Karaites', Ksenia Abkowicz wrote (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 1913: 5–6) (my translation).

She pointed out the same sense of belonging, based on common beliefs or a sense of kinship, about which students of nationalism wrote (e.g. Tishkov 1997; Weber 1978/1922; Wimer 2008). She was convinced that nationalism was not a type of prejudice or an empty word. The author of the article thought that fraternity, a common state and a common language would be ideal for the future, but at that time 'we (Karaites) were far away from the ideal'. Note that her dream of a common state based on common fraternity and a common language went even beyond that of a national revival; it was an expression of the spirit of political nationalism. Abkowicz cited Russia as

an opposite example, where, despite the democratic movements, a deep discord still persisted between different peoples. Abkowicz regretted that pejorative words like *zhid* (a Jew), *polyachishka* (a Polish person), *armyashka* (an Armenian) and *inorodets* (a foreigner) were still in common use, and not only among ordinary people, but also among educated people in the *Duma* (The Russian parliament) too. She noticed that there was a dismissive attitude towards everything non-Russian, even among progressive people. She saw a solution to the problem in the consolidation of peoples in Russia. Abkowicz believed that Karaite power lay also in national (*natsional'nyy*) unification. However, she warned against chauvinism and against hating all things that were not Karaite (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 2 1913: 5–6).

An anonymous author with the initials M.K. proposed the utopian (but interesting for this research) idea of establishing a Karaite colony. M.K., similar to Ksenia Abkowicz, concluded that religion could not play a leading role in the modern world anymore because the Karaites were dispersed throughout Russia. That was why it was more difficult to observe the ancient Karaite traditions and customs. He reminded that those customs and traditions had conceptually united all Karaites in the past. However, the modern world had changed. In his view, the external side of religion could not play a central role anymore. Hence, he believed that Karaites needed another motivating force. The author warned that young people had been susceptible to cosmopolitan tendencies and that they had lost their national (*national'nye*) feelings. But, in the author's view, a person without national feelings and national pride was of no use either to his/her own people or to the country where he/she lived. M.K. also emphasised other problems, like later marriages and a general disregard of social affairs, which might ultimately have a tragic result – the extinction of the people. However, M.K. believed that everything depended on the Karaites themselves. He appealed to readers to fulfil a very important task – to revive the sense of a unique ethnicity and thereby prevent the extinction of a people. In his opinion, the only way forward was to establish a separate colony. The colony would have merged all tendencies and differences among the Karaite people. It would have provided poor people with a source of revenue and they would have not had to move around the country looking for a job. It would have favoured marriages. The colony would have been a centre of Karaitism (in a cultural sense). There would have been a Karaite library housing the national (*national'naya*) literature. The author dreamed that a colony would have played the same role as *Kale* (*Chufut-Kale*) played with its own typography and scholars. M.K. proposed establishing the first colony in Crimea (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 6 1913: 11–12).

The proposal to establish a Karaite colony, along with ideas of Ksenia Abkowicz, can be considered as the next level of the Karaite national revival and as a proto-political national movement, although the ideas were never realised. They would have been difficult to realise because of the scarce number of Karaites.

Another example of national romantic ideas found in the pages of *Karaimskoe Slovo* is the poem 'Rise, my people' (*Воспрянь, мой народъ!*) by M.S. Sinani. He appealed to his people to

live, to rise from their sleep, to revive their soul, to shake off sadness, to sing a new song, to go ahead and not stay on the same path (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 6 1913: 3).

The article 'Light' (*Svetloe*) in the last issue of *Karaimskoe Slovo*, which was about *hakham* elections, called on the Karaite people to start a revival. The author of the article used the pen name *Mladokaraim* (Young Karaite). The resemblance to the name *Mladoturki* (Young Turks) — a secularist Turkish national reform party at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century — is hardly a coincidence. *Mladokaraim* pointed out that until recent times, the Karaite people had been inactive. He argued that the Karaites expressed national (*national'noe*) consciousness and feelings only when they cared for their civil well-being. He pointed out that the people had stagnated. Old religious values have gone out of date, but new ones had not been created, in his view. He regretted that the national image of the Karaites was vanishing because nothing forceful and significant had happened in their national life for many decades: not a single flash of inspiration, nor a single uprising or consolidation of ideas. Only in the last decades, the author admitted, had some Karaites confessed to experiencing feelings of sorrow that they had not done more for their own people. The intelligentsia realised that it needed to shrug off a sense of national apathy and serve the languishing people, and that this should have been the highest purpose for a long time (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 11–12: 7–9).

However, *Mladokaraim* noted that currently the result of the yearning for a national revival was obvious when this yearning captivated all strata of the Karaite people. People experienced an awakening of the national spirit and developed the idea of establishing a national fund and electing a new *hakham*. The *hakham* elections were a demonstration of the national will and a motivation to unite the people (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 11–12: 7–9).

Despite the very nationalistic character of *Karaimskoe Slovo*, we can still find articles by 'conservative' authors on its pages, such as by T.S. Levi and E.YE. Troitskiy, who believed that the Karaites originated from the Biblical Jews. So, for instance, Levi wrote that the Karaites' ancestors had been relieved from the Egyptian yoke (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 5: 3).

A Crimean (from Sevastopol) Karaite named E.YE. Troitskiy, who was previously published in *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, wrote in *Karaimskoe Slovo* that the ancient history of the Karaites was unknown because both Karaites and Jews were generally called Israelites or Jews in The Bible. That is why, in his opinion, historians and others considered them to be the same as the Jews. Just like the Karaite authors writing in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* and those of an earlier period, Troitskiy was a follower of Firkovich and relied on his documents, believing that the Karaites belonged to one of the ten lost Israelite tribes, who had arrived from the Middle East to Crimea before the appearance of the Talmud there.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> However, he had the special view that after the ten tribes had been captured by Salmanasar, they dispersed throughout the Caucasus and Caspian region where, after the decline of the Babylonian kingdom, they established the independent principalities, which now form the Caucasian ethnic regions – D.M.: Mingrels (i.e. newcomers from Holy mountains), Che-shna (i.e. second captives), Ka-Abarda (last captives). Most of them gave up Judaism, the author wrote

The author supported the thesis (which he had already stated in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* previously) that all Karaites of Russia, Turkey, Egypt and Austrian Galicia formed a common community, one subordinate to the religious authorities in Evpatoria and to the *hakham*.

Troitskiy supported a thesis published at the beginning of Firkovich's findings in *Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del* (1843) that the Karaites had disassociated themselves from the Jews for purely religious reasons, and that they constituted a sect, which distinguished them from Jewry by rejecting the Talmud (*Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del*. Book 2, 1843). Since that time, the views of many Karaite authors on the ethnicity of the Karaites had changed considerably. However, this particular author still supported the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century argument.

The author presented a positive image of Karaites, as many other Karaite and non-Karaite authors had done before and after him, which became a kind of national legend repeated from 18<sup>th</sup> century until the present (see the following chapters).<sup>77</sup> This national legend focusing only on a positive image of the Karaites would be repeated through the centuries in both Karaite and non-Karaite publications.<sup>78</sup>

As a part of his positive description of Karaites, the author emphasised that the Karaites did not speak a jargon like the Jews. Did he mean Yiddish? Why did the Jews speak a jargon and the Karaites a language? He mistakenly assumed that the Karaites spoke Persian like the Tatars and many other Asian peoples. He also pointed out that many hosting nations favoured the Karaites, as confirmed by the *firman-yarlyks* and charters, which granted them privileges and benefits, in contrast to the situation faced by the Rabbinic Jews. Among those rulers who favoured the Karaites (Tatar khans, Byzantine and Polish kings, Russian *tsars*), he listed also the Khazars(!). The Karaites had allegedly received charters from the Khazars, though the author has not supported his view by any documentation (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 5: 3).

Just like the Karaite authors of the previous period, some authors contributing to *Karaimskoe Slovo* also concluded, most likely based on Firkovich materials, that the Khazars had converted to Karaite Judaism. Thus, A. Shishman, in response to a publication on the Jewish-Khazar correspondence by Kokovtsov,<sup>79</sup> corrected him by saying that the Karaites and not the Jews were living in the Khazar kingdom at the time. He supported this view by arguing that a Karaite named Yitzhak ha-Sangari had converted the Khazarian king to Karaitism, that the Khazars

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after the Talmud came to the region, and they converted to either Christianity or Islam. Only the Karaites, in his words, those who went deeper into Crimea, remained keepers of the Law of Moses (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 6: 3–8).

<sup>77</sup> He listed good moral traits of the Karaites, such as that they strictly kept the traditions of their ancestors, they were pious, but not fanatic, they were good moral and sober workers and they shunned excessive luxury, lustre and boasting. There were no millionaires among the Karaites, and neither was there extreme poverty, because every Karaite considered it part of their obligation to help others, which was their distinctive character trait. No Karaite had been ever charged with a criminal offence or with parricide (Ibid).

<sup>78</sup> Troitskiy also referred to the article on the Karaites' good moral traits and their occupations, published in *Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del* (he mistakenly thought that it was published by B. Schtern):

'They mainly do gardening and agriculture, some of them are traders, many of them are doing well, some are even wealthy. They are educated and polite...' ('Evrei-karaimy' 1843: 264–265; *Karaimskoe Slovo* 6: 3–8).

<sup>79</sup> P.K. Kokovtsov (1861–1942) was a Russian and Soviet scholar in Semitic and Asian Studies.

practiced Karaite Judaism and not Rabbanite Judaism, and that the Khazar remnants had mixed with the Karaites in Crimea (*Karaimskoe Slovo* 5: 12–13). In other words, he supported a theory of a Khazar-Karaite ethnic merger.

The articles by Troitskiy and Shishman proposed the same theories that had already been published in *Karaimskaya Zhizn*. Their style and arguments seemed to be a little old-fashioned in comparison to the articles by the Lithuanian Karaites with respect to the spirit of national revival.

## Conclusions

### Comparative Analysis of the Periodicals *Karaimskaya Zhizn* and *Karaimskoe Slovo*

The Karaite periodical in the Russian language *Karaimskaya Zhizn* was published by the Karaite community in Moscow in the years 1911–1912. Just a few years later, in 1914, another Karaite periodical in Russian, *Karaimskoe Slovo*, began to be published in Wilno. Both periodicals were intended for all Karaite communities living in the Russian Empire and were widely dispersed among them (see opening remarks regarding both periodicals). Though different in character (*Karaimskaya Zhizn* was more scholarly and *Karaimskoe Slovo* appealed to a more popular genre), both Karaite periodicals played an important role in the formation of a national consciousness and dissemination of ideas among the Karaites of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Editors of both periodicals emphasised their aim of becoming a ‘national institution’ for the Karaite people. Both periodicals intended to educate the Karaites on their own history and to unite the people.

Both periodicals show that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, part of the Karaite population continued to support the idea of a Semitic background for their origin, believed in a relationship with Karaites throughout the whole world and regarded Israel as their motherland (e.g. A. Katyk, I. Kazas, E. Troitskiy in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* and E. Troitskiy and T. Levi in *Karaimskoe Slovo*). In contrast to later publications, authors in both periodicals considered the Karaite communities of the whole world, from Jerusalem to Egypt to Turkey, to be one commonality. There was no reference yet to the Karaites of Eastern Europe and of the rest of the world being different peoples, as we will see in later publications.

The editors of *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, while not refuting a Semitic background for the Karaites, also published anthropological studies on the Turkic origin of the Karaites (‘Antropologiya Karaimov’ 1911), the Khazar theory of Karaite origins (‘Otkuda prishli’ 1911: 46–52), a work by an anonymous author (‘Ne-orientalist’ 1912) and proposals to secularise Karaite life (D. Kokizov).

Therefore, I would not yet describe a process of Turkification with respect to the Karaite identity in the studied period (middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), as is common among the Karaite intelligentsia. For this period, we can speak only of a process of

Karaite emancipation from their Rabbinic fraternity in terms of the common acceptance of theories of an ancient and a separate past of Karaite Jewry from that of Rabbanite Jewry, and the acceptance or partial acceptance of theories of a Khazar ethnic origin for the Karaites by some of the Karaite intelligentsia.

As for national revival, the revival of a national consciousness was discussed in a few articles in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* (S. Raetskiy, M. Fuki, D. Kokizov). However, in the 'more Western-European' *Karaimskoe Slovo*, national issues occupied a much more important place. The ideology of nationalism touched Karaites living in the centre of the Lithuanian national revival to a much greater extent than it did Karaites living more remote from such areas as Crimea and Moscow.

The Karaite Turkic language played a different role in the Karaite national movement in central and western parts of the Russian Empire. In Russia, a Karaite named D. Kokizov even perceived the Turkic language as being an obstacle to a process of modernisation and integration into a 'progressive Russian society' (the editors replied that the decline of the Karaite language was occurring on its own, and so no reforms were really necessary). It should be remembered that the Crimean dialect of the Karaite language was influenced by the Crimean Tatar language to a great extent. That is why when, after the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Empire, the Tatar language ceased to be predominant in Crimea. The Crimean Karaite language ceased to be important too because Karaites were eager to integrate into Russian society.

Contrary to the Crimean Karaites, Lithuanian Karaites regarded their Trakai dialect of the Karaite language as an important determinant of their ethnic uniqueness.

The Hebrew language was generally ignored. The editors of *Karaimskaya Zhizn* stated that one of the tasks of the periodical was to educate people in a language that they already speak because most of them did not know the Hebrew language anymore and, hence, could not read the compositions of earlier Karaite authors. Special attention was not given to the problem and no attempts were made to revive knowledge of the language. The editors of *Karaimskoe Slovo* also focused on the problem of Hebrew and the religious education of Karaite children. However, the editors realised that it was impossible to carry out the general education of Karaite children in Hebrew and appealed to Karaite families to instead manage the task.

Both periodicals emphasised the significant role the intelligentsia needed to play in the national movement. They accused the intelligentsia of a lack of initiative and appealed to them to actively participate in national life (see the article 'Natsional'noe samosoznanie' by D. Kokizov in *Karaimskaya Zhizn* and a foreword article in *Karaimskoe Slovo*). This was no accident because ideological leaders mostly took the initiative and played a decisive role in national movements, transmitting their national ideologies to the broad masses (Snyder 1990: 407). (See more in the 'Final Discussion' of this study). The same was the case with the Karaite 'National Movement'. The editorial board of *Karaimskoe Slovo* wished that the spirit of nationalism would touch upon and affect all social strata.



The Karaites did not have national organisations or institutions, which is the reason most scholars avoid speaking of a Karaite ‘National Movement’ (see the previous chapter for Kizilov's criticism of Schur's use of the term national movement when discussing the Karaites in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Despite that fact, the journal *Karaimskaya Zhizn* proposed establish such national organisations (e.g., ‘national clubs’ (*natsional'nye kluby*) and ‘a national library’ (*natsional'naya biblioteka*) in Evpatoria; *Karaimskoe Slovo* proposed ‘a national colony’ (*natsional'naya koloniya*) and a Karaite state (K. Abkowicz); and both periodicals proposed establishing a ‘national fund’ (*natsional'nyy fond*). One motivation for establishing such national organisations mainly stemmed from the sense of a national (*natsional'nyy*) crisis, against which Karaite writers in both periodicals (Raetskiy, D. Kokizov, Fuki – *Karaimskaya Zhizn*; MladoKaraim – *Karaimskoe Slovo*) had warned. This crisis would have included the dispersion of the Karaites among other peoples, the loss of national distinctive features and the separation of the younger Karaite generation from their people. The elections of a *hakham* also served as a temporary impetus for the revival of a national consciousness.

According to articles in both periodicals, already at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Karaite religion had started to lose its previous importance as a uniting link among Karaites, especially among the younger generation (see D. Kokizov in *Karaimskaya Zhizn*). This was also part of a more general trend in the world. In *Karaimskoe Slovo*, a Karaite named Ksenia Abkowicz was probably the first at the time to suggest that neither religion nor language were the strongest forces unifying the Karaites in her day; rather, it was the sense of a common affinity. She also dreamed of a common state (sic). However, she understood that her dream was too far from the current reality to be realised. Based on the above statements from the periodicals, we can conclude that weakening religious identity and a decline in the Karaite language in everyday life caused a search for new elements from which to construct a national identity. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Karaites had a ‘National Movement’, at least among their intelligentsia.

### **General Conclusions on the First Period of the Karaite ‘National Movement’ in Eastern Europe in the Middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> and Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

In contrast to Russian scholars, whose works on the ethnic origin of the Karaites were discussed in the previous chapter, the Karaites themselves were divided into several groups on the question on their ethnic belonging. All of them willingly accepted the ‘Crimean theory’ of their ancient settlement in the peninsula and the theory of the Khazar conversion to Karaite Judaism, supported by the materials found by Abraham Firkovich. However, some of them (Yu.D. Kokizov, Beim, Shugurov's testimony of Karaite opinion) were firstly confused by the suppositions of the

Russian scholars and anthropologists regarding the Khazar ethnic background of the Karaites. They were not ready to accept new theories and denied that the Karaites were descendants of the Khazars. After all, A. Firkovich's sources had referred only to a friendship between the ancient non-Talmudic 'proto-Karaites' and the great Khazars, who, allegedly, professed non-Talmudic Judaism. Thus, there were Karaites who defended their Semitic background in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, some of them, influenced by the authority of the Russian Turkologists and anthropologists, accepted the new theories at least in part, with reservations about a mixed Khazar-Jewish ethnic origin for the Karaites. Thus, Yu.D. Kokizov emphasised that the 'Karaites were never Khazars', but at the same time, he speculated that remnants of the Khazars had joined the Karaites and merged with them. He was probably the first Karaite to reiterate the arguments of Russian scholars (Grigor'ev, Smirnov) about the mixed Khazarian-Semitic origin of the modern Karaites. There were also those who totally supported a theory of the Khazar-Karaite merger, for instance a young university student named Seraya Szapszał.

### **Reasons for the Karaite National Movement**

Why did the Karaite 'National Movement' start in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and not earlier? Kizilov wrote that the main impulse for the beginning manifestations of an independent Karaite nationalism was their social adaptation to the changing political environment within the Russian Empire, followed by a need to adapt to shifting politics of the Polish Republic, an independent Lithuania and Soviet Russia. This argument is true. However, another no less important factor was the common spread of national movements throughout Europe from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see the 'Final Discussion' chapter for details) and the general secularisation of Russian and European societies. In the context of secularisation, the Karaites adopted Turkic theories regarding their origin, which became the basis for their new secular/ethnic Turkic identity as the substitute for a religious identity.

When speaking of reasons for the national movement of the Karaites, earlier researchers referred to the willingness of the Karaites to maintain their social status and to integrate into Russian society. As one previous researchers wrote, the Karaites intended to maintain the social, economic and political status they enjoyed in Russian society over that of the Rabbanites (Miller 2000: 335). In this regard, Karaite Jewishness started to become an obstacle in the way of integration into Russian society (Kizilov 2011: 142–143). Kizilov spoke of external and internal impulses for the beginnings of the independent Karaite national movement. The above-mentioned reasons were external factors that motivated the leaders of the Crimean community to separate themselves from their Rabbanite brethren, and eventually to seek an independent national identity (Miller 2000: 341; Kizilov 2014). I consider scholarly research on the Karaites' ethnic origin by

non-Karaites to be among the other major external factors. However, there were internal factors (inter-communal, as Kizilov called them), too. When Karaite ideologists, first and foremost A. Firkovich, proposed the theory of an independent past from Rabbinical Jews (Harviainen 2003: 650), it found sympathy and support. The theory was then elaborated upon further by other Karaite leaders (Kizilov 2014: 341). Then, some members of the Karaite community gradually began to support a Khazar theory. In my opinion, two conceptions, one regarding their ancient past and the other having to do with their Turkic ethnic origins, found support because their religion and the Hebrew language had lost their former importance. That was why these ideological concepts became new special features or determinants of the Karaites' particular identity and contributed to a new Karaite ethnic identity, one more relevant in the new world of nation-states. Thus, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a process of change began with respect to the Karaite identity from that of a religious Semitic identity to an ethnic Turkic identity. It started with the Karaite intelligentsia, as any national movement begins, and then, we may suppose (according to Hroch's theory), it dispersed throughout the whole community via Karaite periodicals. However, we do not have sources on the scale of acceptance of these ideas among common Karaites.

### **Characteristic Features and Stages of the Karaite 'National Movement' According to Previous Researchers**

Harviainen has pointed out that from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Karaites experienced a cultural revival. A Karaite secular literature appeared (Harviainen 2003: 650). The Karaites started to write on non-religious subjects and produced fables, ballads, satirical songs and plays in Russian and Polish (Schur 1992: 117). They started to use the Karaite language in liturgy services in *kenesas*. Harviainen emphasised that even up to the present, the 'Karaites are the only Turkic nationality which makes use of its native language in religious services' (Harviainen 2003: 650).

Kizilov noted the particular role of scholarship in Karaite nationalism. As in the case of practically all 'national inventions', three new disciplines, archaeology, palaeontology and anthropology, played an important role in the revival of Karaite national consciousness, namely A. Firkovich's archaeological and palaeontological discoveries and various anthropological studies (Kizilov 2014: 338 ref. 27, 382 ref. 31).

The Karaite 'National Movement' also experienced a period of Romanticism, as we can clearly see in *Karaimskoe Slovo* and in some articles in *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, written for example by Raetskiy, who used plenty of 'national' terminology. In the period of Romanticism and the national revival of peoples, mythological concepts usually appeared as a way of making the past more ancient or more heroic (Kizilov 2014: 377). Examples of Karaite romanticism are theories on the antiquity of their past (e.g. the 'Crimean theory'), the formation of heroic legends, like the one

based on the Madjalis document and a later one about Vitold (see next chapter), and improving their ancestral legacy owing to the powerful Khazars and their great empire in former times (Kizilov 2014: 377). Such legends strengthened a feeling of ethnic unity, national spirit and patriotism (Kizilov 2014: 377). However, the Karaites were not the only community that formed nationalism ideologies and romanticised their history. Practically all ethnic communities did so at the time (Kizilov 2014: 377).

### **Periodisation of the Karaite Movement during the Russian Imperial Period**

We can outline a few stages of the Karaite national movement during the Russian Imperial period. The first stage, an activity period that pre-dated Firkovich's work in the 1840s, was a period of successful Karaite embassies and petitions to the Austrian and Russian administrations at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (see the previous chapter). Kizilov wrote that it was the earliest manifestation of the awakening of an independent Karaite national feeling (Kizilov 2011: 132). The second stage is the period of Firkovich's activity, from the 1840s through the end of the 1870s: A. Firkovich's archaeological excavations and findings aimed to prove the ancient settlement of the Karaites in Crimea (the 'Crimean theory') and to show a Karaite past separate from that of the Rabbanite Jews. The third stage was the post-Firkovich period in the 1870s–1917. This is a period of Karaite responses to the 'Khazar theory' regarding Karaite ethnic origins, which was born in the minds of Russian Turkologists and anthropologists and was not at first accepted by all Karaites, only by some of them.

Later, in the following chapters, we will see that the 'Khazar theory' would be developed further and come to occupy a strong position that has prevailed until current times.

The first three stages of Karaite nationalism correspond to the first phase of national movements (Phase A) according to Hroch's model, which he called 'academic interest' (see final discussion for details).

The revolution of 1917 and establishment of the Soviet regime dramatically influenced the fate of Karaites in the USSR. Being very loyal and grateful to Tsarist Russia, many of them failed to adapt to the new regime. About one thousand Karaites migrated to Turkey, Germany and France. A drastic decline in their numbers and the assimilation of their culture awaited those who stayed in the Soviet Union (Kizilov 2011: 142) (see the part of this study on the 'Soviet Period').

## Chapter 5. Karaite Studies on the Pages of the Karaite Periodical *Myśl Karaimska* and Their Role in the Construction of a New Karaite Ethnic Identity in Poland and Lithuania from the 1920s to the 1960s

### Introduction: Historical Background

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Karaites' social and scholarly activities practically ceased in the territory of the newly established Soviet Republic. The centre of Karaite publications shifted to the newly re-established nations of Poland and Lithuania.<sup>80</sup> As M. Kizilov observed:

Surprisingly, a tiny Karaite community of interwar Poland and Lithuania (ca. 800 individuals) had been publishing as many as five periodicals in three languages! Furthermore, the Karaites also printed quite a number of separate brochures and leaflets, and published articles in non-Karaite periodicals... The renaissance of Karaite printing was stopped in 1939, with the Soviet intervention in Poland and the beginning of the Second World War. (Kizilov 2007a: 399)

After the Karaites returned from the evacuations that had occurred during World War I (mainly from Crimea) to Poland and Lithuania in the 1920s, the Karaite intelligentsia continued its task of strengthening Karaite self-consciousness. Accordingly, 'the care for the preservation of ethnic self-consciousness, which had started before the war (see the discussion on National Romanticism in *Karaimskoe Slovo* in the previous chapter of this study), became even stronger; especially when both re-established national states — Lithuania and Poland — took resolute steps in fostering national self-consciousness and a feeling of patriotism' (Kobeckaite 1997: 41). Moreover, 'the restoration of Karaite social life began in the course of the ideological environment of the newly restored states, the Lithuanian and Polish republics, where national-patriotic education played a significant role, and favoured the task of the Karaite intelligentsia in strengthening Karaite self-consciousness' (Kobeckaite 2008: 268).

After World War I, one of the main achievements of the Karaite Vilnius society was beginning the publication of *Myśl Karaimska* [Karaite Thought], a Karaite periodical in Polish, in 1924 by the initiative of the then young Karaite Orientalist, a professor of Turkology at Warsaw

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<sup>80</sup> Karaite tradition tells that Grand Duke Vitold of Lithuania (Vytautas Magnus) defeated the Tatars in Crimea in 1392 and carried from there 483 Karaite families among the captured (Zajączkowski 1961: 69. Ref. is from Schur 1992). He settled them in Lithuania: in Troki (near Wilna.) in Lutsk and Halicz in Volhynia. The Karaites spread from there to other centres of the country: Volhynia and Podolia (Schur 1992: 107). Since then, the Karaites had idealised Vytautas Magnus for helping settle them in Lithuania. One can find the portrait of Vytautas Magnus in the most respectable place in the house of almost any Karaite. (Kobeckaite 1997: Introduction. See also Syrokomla 1857). However, this tradition of connecting Karaite settlement in Lithuania with Vitold appeared quite late, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Still as late as in 1838, Halich Hazzan Abraham Leonowicz stated that Karaites had lived in the Russian lands in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Pelczyński 1995: 54–55). This was also mentioned in Mordechai Sultanski's book (1838).

University named Ananiasz Zajączkowski (1903–1970).<sup>81</sup> The well-known Polish Turkologist from University of Krakow Tadeusz Kowalski (1889–1948)<sup>82</sup> also became a member of the editorial board. In the first issue of the magazine, the editorship set a mission for all Karaites to help ‘preserve the Karaite ethnic identity and to unite people’ (Kobeckaitė 2008a: 60).

Another important event in the life of the Karaite community was the election of Seraya Szapszał<sup>83</sup> (he called himself His Excellency *Hajji* Seraya Khan Szapszał — see Archiwum Akt Nowych: 30, 97) as the highest priest by the assembly of the representatives of local Karaite religious communities in Trakai on 23 October 1927. At that time, he lived in Istanbul, which he left in 1928 and moved to Vilnius for the rest of his life until 1961 (Kobeckaitė 2008a: 60). S. Szapszał's arrival was very important not only for religious life, but also for the secular life of the community.

### **The Society of the Lovers of Karaite History and Literature in Vilnius**

The newly elected leader, H. S. Szapszał, fully realised his mission and took into consideration the vibrant life of Vilnius's societies as well as the patriotic movements of different national groups within the city. He took the initiative in establishing The Society of the Lovers of Karaite History and Literature there in 1932, with the help of Tadeusz Kowalski and Ananiasz Zajączkowski, together with others from the Karaite intelligentsia. Szapszał was declared an honorary chairperson of the Society. Szapszał was a known Orientalist; hence, his membership in the Society and his activity in Vilnius aroused interest in Oriental studies and enlivened research in the field of Turkology. Since its establishment, the Society had taken over control of the academic and literary periodical *Myśl Karaimska*, which became thicker and more academic (Kobeckaitė 2008a: 65); undoubtedly, it was one of the society's greatest achievements. In 1930, T. Kowalski wrote in *Myśl Karaimska* a review of a monograph about the Crimean Karaites-Turks by Szapszał, which had been published in Turkey (see below). Since then, Szapszał contributed to each issue of *Myśl Karaimska*, until it ceased to be published in 1940 (Kobeckaitė 2008a: 60).

The Society of the Lovers of Karaite History and Literature united not only the Lithuanian Karaite communities of Vilnius, Biržai, Naujamiestis, Panevėžys, Pasvalys and Talačkonys, but also the communities of Trakai, Lutsk and Halich, which were Polish territories at that time. Due to the efforts by members of the Society, information about ‘the most western Turkic minority’ (as Professor Kowalski called the Karaites) reached other countries. The Society became a very important cultural and scientific institution, not only for the Karaite community, but also for Polish Orientalists and Turkologists of that time. It played a very important role both in stimulating studies

81 The Polish Karaite Ananiasz Zajączkowski (1903–1970) is a renowned European Orientalist, one of the most productive of Karaite scholars. He influenced considerably the secular aspects of Karaite ‘ethnic’ self-identification (see more in Szyszman 1966: 39–40; Bairašaukaitė and Kobeckaitė 1993. See also the appendix ‘Biographies’).

82 See the appendix ‘Biographies’.

83 On Szapszał's biography, see the previous chapter of this study. See also the appendix ‘Biographies’.

on Karaite history and culture, carried out by Karaites as well as by non-Karaite scientists, and in inspiring Karaite 'ethnic' identity. The Society welcomed scientists from abroad, from other places where Karaite communities lived, to visit Vilnius. Thus, it established international contacts among the Karaite communities of the world: scholars came to give lectures about Karaites and published works on them in Western Europe and Istanbul (Kobeckaitė 2008a: 64). Furthermore, the Society fulfilled a huge educative mission by promoting among young Karaite people patriotic feelings, a national consciousness as well as a love of their native language and culture (Kobeckaitė 2008a: 61, 65).

The Society strengthened the interest of Karaites and other scholars in Karaite historical, cultural and linguistic studies. Such well-known scholars as the already-mentioned professors, Tadeusz Kowalski and Ananiasz Zajączkowski, as well as Marian Morelowski, J. Kierzynski, Włodzimierz Zajączkowski (a professor from Krakow University) and Jan Reychmano (later became a famous Polish Orientalist) participated in the Society's activities and published in *Myśl Karaimska* (in 1929–1939) (Kobeckaitė 2008a: 61–63).

Szapszał also hoped to establish a Karaite museum for storing and exhibiting the cultural heritage of the Karaite people. He initiated construction of the museum in 1938. However, whereas both the construction and collection of material for the museum were completed in 1939, World War II prevented its opening. Thus, for a long time the museum's collection was housed in Szapszał's apartment and the Trakai Karaite Museum was opened only in 1967. Currently, part of the Karaite collection is also exhibited at the National Museum of Lithuania (Ibid).

### **Components of Karaite Ethnic Identity Traced from *Myśl Karaimska***

*Myśl Karaimska* was published in Wilno (presently Vilnius, which was Polish at the time) from 1924 to 1939 (Kizilov 2007a; see also the appendix 'Periodicals'). Then, after the break caused by World War II, it reappeared in Wrocław from 1945 to 1947.<sup>84</sup> After 1947, it changed its name to *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* [Oriental Review] and its purpose, orienting itself now to a more academic audience (Kizilov 2007a: 406). The periodical continues to exist under the same name, but it is not a Karaite periodical anymore. The language of *Myśl Karaimska* was Polish, as a sign of loyalty to the Polish state, but some short stories and poems were published in the Karaite language (Kizilov 2007a: 405). The chief-editor and the main publisher of *Myśl Karaimska* was Ananiasz Rojecki. However, as Kizilov wrote, in the late 1920s, after the arrival of Szapszał and the beginning of the academic career of young Ananiasz Zajączkowski, relations between Rojecki and other members of *Myśl Karaimska* and the Karaite community started to deteriorate (Kizilov 2007:

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<sup>84</sup> *Myśl Karaimska*. Wilno, Vol. I 1924–1928, Vol. II 1929–1939; *Myśl Karaimska*. New Series Vol. I 1945–1946, Vol. II 1946–1947. Twelve issues of the periodical were printed in the pre-war period in Wilno (1924–1939) and two in Wrocław (1946–1947).

403). In 1929, Zajączkowski became the main editor of the periodical, which influenced its content. Despite this change, according to Szymon Szyszman, Szapszał remained one of the main editors of *Myśl Karaimska*. However, Zajączkowski's influence was still quite important (Kizilov 2007: 403).

It is worth comparing *Myśl Karaimska* with another important Karaite periodical, *Karaïmskaya Zhizn*, which had been published earlier in Moscow from 1911 to 1912 (see the previous chapter of this study). At first sight, both periodicals had much in common, especially if we look at the first issues of *Myśl Karaimska*. However, as Kizilov noticed, *Karaïmskaya Zhizn* had been publishing for the internal community, while *Myśl Karaimska* intended to introduce Karaites to the world: it was 'a Karaite business card to the world' (Kowalski's term) (Kizilov 2007a: 403). The articles produced by the Polish-Karaite authors in the first issue of *Myśl Karaimska* (1924) concerning Karaite identity are similar in their ideas to those of their Russian-Karaite colleagues in *Karaïmskaya Zhizn*. The authors of the first volume of *Myśl Karaimska* (1924) referred mostly to the same sources and same authors in a debate on the origin of Karaites as their Russian predecessors had done a decade earlier. However, every subsequent volume of *Myśl Karaimska* was more secular and more progressive in producing ideas on the Karaites' origin and identity than the previous writings of their more conservative Russian counterparts.

### **Religion and Tradition**

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Karaites perceived a sense of belonging through their religious practices (Kobeckaite 2008: 268). Religion was a core part of their ethnic consciousness. Likewise, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century religion continued to unite the Karaites, but not through its sacral content so much as through its existence as an institution serving as the main instrument for the preservation of the Karaite identity (Kobeckaite 2008: 268). The observance of ritual traditions became a condition for belonging to the Karaite people and culture. Moreover, under the influence of the above-mentioned national-patriotic movements in Europe at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the national consciousness of Karaites 'ceased to be locked only on religion', and the Karaite community 'started to feel itself not only a bearer of a particular religion, but a bearer of an ethnic culture – Turkic in its root. And enlightened circles of the community felt responsible for its preservation' (Kobeckaite 2008: 268). Thus, according to Kobeckaite, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century religion started to occupy a different place in modern life than in previous centuries (Kobeckaite 2008: 269–270). In this context, all responsibility for the preservation of the ethnic identity and its characteristics, first of all, of the language, was transferred onto the family and onto the older generation, who preserved the language, religion and old traditions (Kobeckaite 2008: 269–270).



The Karaites highlighted their religious and linguistic differences from the main branch of Jewish (Rabbanites) since ancient times. However, close study of the periodical *Myśl Karańska* demonstrates that in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Karaite religion and the Karaite language started to take on a different meaning for the Karaite ‘national identity’, namely, they became conflated with national feelings. At the same time, with respect to their new proto-national identity (‘ethnic’), the significance of their anthropological type (ethnic origin) and of the Karaite language increased, but that of religion decreased. (The idea and notion of a Karaite national identity, though, appeared already at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as we saw in *Karańskaya Zhizn*. We could find there the Russian term *natsiya* used in the sense of *ethnicity*; however, the notion of ethnicity (*narodowość*) became firmly established later in *Myśl Karańska*.) During the interwar period, these tendencies gradually gained more strength. Thus, as printed sources show, the religious identity of the Karaites was correspondingly replaced by an ‘ethnic’ (proto-national) identity. The Karaim language (which became the national language of the Karaites in Poland and Lithuania) played a central role in that change; its importance for the cultivation of national feelings was increasingly emphasised in the very next volume of *Myśl Karańska*.

We saw in the Russian-Karaite periodical *Karańskaya Zhizn* that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the main components of Karaite self-identification were the Karaite religion and the Karaim Turkic language. In contrast, only in the first issues of *Myśl Karańska* did the Karaite religion continue to play an important role in the construction of the Karaite identity. Thus, in the first issue of the periodical (1924), a Polish Karaite named Zarach Zarachowicz worried:

...what will Karaism emphasise if the religion and the language are forgotten? (Zarachowicz 1924: 5)<sup>85</sup> (my translation)

Zarachowicz also emphasised that the Karaites should realise how important the religious education of the younger generation was for the existence of the Karaite people:

Our religion is our spiritual stronghold, which binds us to the surface of life, because with our religion so do the Karaites rise and fall. Thus, our religion is related to a central question: To be or not to be? (Zarachowicz 1924: 5–6)<sup>86</sup> (my translation)

He warned that it is frightful to think about what would happen to the Karaites if their religion became alien to the young people.

Another Polish Karaite, Dr. Zacharjasz Nowachowicz, also wrote about the importance of consolidating the Polish Karaites around their religious life (Nowachowicz 1925: 1–4). He

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85 Original:

‘...cóż będzie akcentować Karaizm, jeśli język i religija będą zapomniane’ (Zarachowicz 1924: 5).

86 Original:

‘Nasza religja, to jest nasza duchowa ostoja, która nas utrzymuje na powierzchni życia, bo Karaimowie z swoją religiją stoją i upadają, że z religiją naszą jest dla nas zwięzane pytanie: być, albo nie być?’ (Zarachowicz 1924: 5–6).

considered the Karaite religion as a symbol for the life of the Karaite community (Nowachowicz 1925: 3).<sup>87</sup>

Nowachowicz appealed to Karaites to reorganise their current religious activity because it only took place occasionally, without any planned programme. The author also worried that Karaites might choose to assimilate after receiving a common European education. He wrote that only realising the necessity of properly organising Karaite social life based on tradition and community requirements would help the Karaites, the smallest minority in Poland, to consolidate and survive. That is why, he reckoned, their leaders should not allow the Karaite intelligentsia to participate in the cultural life of non-Karaite institutions (Nowachowicz 1925: 3).<sup>88</sup> He, as well as his predecessors, called for the maintenance of the Karaite traditions of their forefathers.

One article in *Myśl Karaimska* shows that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the fear of assimilation and of losing their ethnic peculiarities led sometimes to segregation tendencies within the Karaite community when, for instance, Karaite parents punished their children for learning Russian as a foreign language because they were afraid that their children communicating with Russians would estrange them from their own traditions (Charczenko 1925: 29–31). This fear of assimilation probably had its roots in the resistance of the Polish and Lithuanian peoples to the politics of Russification. As the article later demonstrates, Karaites in Poland did not consider Polish a foreign language and were not afraid of learning it, unlike Russian.

## Language

The Karaite language has been one of the main components in the construction of the Karaite identity since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Karaite language — ‘Karaite treasure’, as a Karaite named Zacharjasz Zarachowicz called it (Zarachowicz 1924: 6) — provided the basis for cultural distinctiveness. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some Karaite authors (e.g. Zajączkowski) used it as a tool for their national ideology: as a tool for de-Judification and as an argument for their alleged descent from the Khazars (Freund 1991: 11). The originality, greatness and importance of the Karaite language are all emphasised in many of the articles in *Myśl Karaimska*. However, at the same time, the significance of Hebrew was not yet played down in the first volume of *Myśl Karaimska*:

Besides the Biblical language, which every Karaite should know because the holy language serves in our prayers to God and in glorifying His name, the works by our Karaite scholars are written in it [Hebrew], its study is an obligation of every Karaite; every Karaite must know his

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87 Original:

‘Symbolem naszego indywidualnego życia jest nasza Wiara’ (Nowachowicz 1925: 3).

88 Original:

‘nie powinno dopuszczać do tego – by nasze krytycznie myślące jednostki szukały oparcia w organizacjach postronnych’ (Nowachowicz 1925: 3).

mother tongue and use it in everyday life, because, what will Karaism emphasise if the religion and language are forgotten? (Zarachowicz 1924: 6)<sup>89</sup> (my translation)

Drawing support from his words about the importance of the language for the existence of the people, Zarachowicz referred to the words of a certain leader of the Italian national movement (whose name he did not mention), who said that

if a language exists, a people does too. (Zarachowicz 1924: 6) (my translation)

As for the Hebrew language, Kizilov wrote that:

In the interwar period, the Karaite community of Poland and Lithuania continued using Hebrew as a language of liturgy – but completely abandoned Hebrew as a language of publishing activity. In contrast to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when most Karaite books were published in Hebrew, not a single book (!) had been published by the Karaites in Hebrew in the period from 1919 to 1939. It seems that interwar Karaite leaders (first of all, Seraya Szapszał) did not want to publish anything in Hebrew in order to completely disassociate the Karaites from the Rabbanite Jews. Paradoxically, the ban on the use of Hebrew provoked a sudden rise of literary activity in the Polish and Karaim language. It is in this period that Karaim started to be a literary language used for secular poems, stories, historical and polemic articles, translations from foreign languages, and even fairy-tales. (Kizilov 2007: 400–401)

Thus, in this period there was a dramatic increase in interest in the Karaite language, which coincides with scholarly interest period according to Hroch's theory (Phase A). However, Karaites still used Hebrew terms in the Karaite language as late as 1927 in Crimea, Poland and Lithuania (some terms, for instance, *midrash* and *luach*, are in use today). But in order for the de-Judification of the Karaite liturgy, Karaites added Karaite names that were equivalent to Hebrew ones (Freund 1991: 14).<sup>90</sup>

In the 1930s, a new interest in the Karaite language arose in academic scholarship. Thus, T. Kowalski stressed the importance of the Karaim language for scholarship (Kowalski 1926: 3–6).<sup>91</sup> He noted that the Karaite language preserved many original words and phrases that other modern Turkic languages had lost. At the same time, Kowalski mentioned that the Karaite language contained many loan words from Hebrew, Arabic, New Persian and the Slavic languages, but mainly from Polish (Kowalski 1926: 3–6). This fact testifies, in his perspective, to the fact that the Karaites had been under the direct influence of Muslim culture before they had come to Poland (i.e.

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89 Original:

‘Obok języka biblijnego, który każdy Karaim znać powinien, - bo w tym świętym języku modli się do Boga i chwali Imię Jego, w tym języku pisane są dzieła naszych uczonych, poznanie których jest także obowiązkiem każdego Karaima – każdy Karaim powinien znać swój język, używać go w życiu domowym i towarzyskim, bo cóż będzie akcentować Karaimizm jeśli język i religja nasza będą zapomniane?’ (Zarachowicz 1924: 6).

90 For example, see a calendar edited by Levi Babovich (1879—1959).

91 He wrote that the Turkic languages used to be spoken in a vast territory. The Karaim language, he noted, ‘is the most western Turkic language on the map of Turkic languages’ (Kowalski 1926: 3–6). He appreciated the fact that while many Turkic languages had become extinct, the Karaites had managed to preserve their language down to the present. Kowalski was convinced that if the Karaites succeeded in preserving their language, it would mean that they would have succeeded in preserving their identity, not having assimilated (Kowalski 1926: 3–6).

The author emphasised that the Polish Karaite dialect preserved the purity of the Karaite language, contrary to Crimean Karaite, which contained many loan words from the Crimean Tatar, Azerbaijani and Ottoman Turkish languages (Kowalski 1926: 3–6).

in the Black sea area from the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century) (Kowalski 1926: 3–6).<sup>92</sup> Hence, he believed that the Polish Karaites arrived from Crimea.

Zajęczkowski's linguistic study of Khazar culture (Zajęczkowski 1945–1946: 5–34) became a first post-war issue of the periodical. He argued that the Karaites, among only a few other ethnic groups, had inherited the Khazar culture. Hence, he emphasised the importance of the Karaim language for Karaite studies and he regretted that Turkologists had not studied it properly. Zajęczkowski wondered that if the Balkars are recognised as the descendants of the Muslim Bulgars, then why not finally define the Karaites as the official successors of the Khazar culture? He referred to A. Samoylovich as one of only few scholars who had searched for descendants of Khazar culture from among Karaites (as well as among such Caucasian mountain groups as the Karachays, Balkars and Tats) (Samoylovich 1924: 200–210).<sup>93</sup>

Zajęczkowski's theories reflect a striving among Karaite scholars to pronounce the Karaites as a Turkic people who were descendants of the Khazars.

### **Karaite Positive Image as Their ‘National Saga’ and as an Element for the Construction of Their Ethnic Identity**

*Myśl Karaimska* paid special attention to the positive moral image and descriptions of the Karaites in earlier travel accounts of the 18–19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Earlier, the Russian administration had also used a positive image of them as an anti-Rabbinical propaganda tool (see the previous chapter of this study). The descriptions of travellers in particular were based on the contrast between ‘good Jews-Karaites’, who had not participated in Christ’s crucifixion, and ‘bad Rabbinical Jews’, spoiled by the Talmud (Kizilov 2007: 332 and 345, ref. 10).

Thus, non-Karaites helped create a positive image of the Karaites. In their turn, the Karaites reflected on and included such images in the construction of their ethnic identity. This image of good Karaite Jews, as opposed to the flawed Talmudic Jews, became a kind of ‘national saga’. *Myśl Karaimska* contains quite many such descriptions of the Karaites as respected, honest and law-

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92 Original:

‘Osobną, dość liczną grupę stanowią zapożyczenia z zakresu kultury muzułmańskiej, a mianowicie z języka arabskiego i nowoperskiego, z przewagą tych ostatnich. Dowodzą one ponad wszelką wątpliwość, że Karaimi, zanim przywędrowali do Polski, pozostawali przez dłuższy czas pod bezpośrednim wpływem kultury muzułmańskiej. Mogło to być tylko na obszarach okalających morze Czarne, wystawionych, począwszy gdzieś od końca XI wieku, na silne działanie kultury Islamu, z wybitną przewagą pierwiastków perskich’ (Kowalski 1926: 3–6).

93 In support of his theory, Samoylovich used linguistic material — such as Karaite names of the week, which preserved Christian, Muslim and Mosaic terms. In his turn, Zajęczkowski supported the theory by tracing proto-Turkic shamanic traditions allegedly reflected in the Karaim language. In addition, he drew an analogy between the use of the everyday Turkic languages and that used in religious liturgy and the Hebrew used in the writings by Khazars and Karaites. Zajęczkowski believed that most probably the Khazars converted to the Karaite form of Judaism (Zajęczkowski 1945–1946: 28–32).

abiding people. Thus, *Myśl Karaimska* also played an important role in the popularisation of the positive image of Karaites.

One of the components of the good image of the Karaites is their image of being good citizens, wherever they lived. The Karaites had the ability to integrate well and, at the same time, not to assimilate.<sup>94</sup> Thus, in *Myśl Karaimska* the Karaite Z. Nowachowicz appealed to Karaites to be good (Polish and Lithuanian) citizens and, at the same time, not to forget to be Karaites. He appealed to every Karaite and to the whole Karaite community to dedicate themselves to the task of continuing the traditions of their ancestors and occupying a proper place in their motherland (meaning Poland).<sup>95</sup> He appealed to people's national feelings.

There are also general positive descriptions of the good character of the Karaites as opposed to negative descriptions of the impoverished Polish-Lithuanian Rabbanites. Other popular positive characteristics of the Karaites that can be found in the pages of *Myśl Karaimska* and in earlier sources included Karaite honesty (for example, see Zajęczkowski 1928: 52–53) as well as their diligent fulfilment of their civic duty and orderliness. As Tadeusz Czacki (1860) wrote:

Documents testify to the fact that no Karaite has been caught for any crime in our country throughout four centuries. (Czacki 1860: 145, as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 12)<sup>96</sup> (my translation)

Among the Karaites, nobody has been involved in any serious crime. (Wierzyński 1934: 18, my translation)<sup>97</sup> (my translation)

We respect the righteousness of those straight men. (Czacki 1860: 145, as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 13, my translation)<sup>98</sup> (my translation)

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94 Nowachowicz also appealed to the Karaites to establish some kind of legal relationship with the Polish state. At the same time, he was afraid of assimilation:

‘Can we further stagnate without a defined relationship with the Polish state — as a tolerated element — not as an element without a legal and stable organisation? At that, our inner life is also suffering — our traditions and affiliation with the roots of our people have weakened. We will soon educate ourselves according to the common European culture — these issues should have been decided within our communities; we should not allow our intelligentia to seek support from outside [non-Karaite] organisations’ (Nowachowicz 1925: 4) (my translation).

Original:

‘A w dalszym ciągu czyż możemy dalej wegetować bez określonego stosunku wobec Państwa — jako element tolerowany — a nie mający prawnej i trwałej organizacji. Na tem cierpi nasze życie wewnętrzne — nasza tradycja i osłabła się poczucie przynależności jednostek do macierzystego pnia. Skoro my kształcimy siebie na ogólnie europejskiej kulturze, — to sfery, decydujące w łonie naszych gmin, nie powinny dopuszczać do tego — by nasze krytycznie myślące jednostki szukały oparcia w organizacjach postoronnych’ (Nowachowicz 1925: 4).

95 Original:

‘Dążeniem każdej naszej jednostki i całego ogółu musi być poświęcenie wszystkiego dla naszej sprawy i kontynuowanie tradycji naszych przodków kierunku zajęcia godnego stanowiska wśród obywateli naszej Ojczyzny — która obok naszej ojczystej wiary i tradycji musi być dla nas przedmiotem pietyzmu i umiłowania’ (Nowachowicz 1925: 3).

96 Original:

‘Akta świadczą, że Karaita o zbrodnię przez cztery wieki nie był w naszym kraju przekonany’ (Czacki 1860: 145, as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 12).

97 Original:

‘Żaden z Karaimów nie był dotąd zamieszany do żadnego, ważnego przestępstwa’ (Wierzyński 1934: 18).

98 Original:

‘Nie szukajmy w społeczności Karaimskie (in original source: ‘... w społeczności Karaitów’) nauk, ale szanujmy tych prostaków cnotę’ (Czacki 1860: 145, as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 13).

W. Smokowski (1841, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II: 12), Syrokomla, Jan Grzegorzewski (Gazeta Wieczorna, no. 5226, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska* 1934: 13) and Talko-Hryncewicz also mentioned their honesty, for instance:

Karaites differ based on their good character and customs, sobriety and honesty. All our writers speak about them with sympathy. (Talko-Hryncewicz 1904: 50) (my translation)

A Rabbanite scholar named Bałaban, who was usually critical of the Karaites, also mentioned, among other good characteristics of the Karaites, their nice character and honesty (as cited in Zajączkowski 1928: 64–65).<sup>99</sup>

Another common description of the Karaites was of them as people who are ‘unspoilt by the Talmud’. Wierzyński emphasised that the Karaites were a Jewish people. However, the law precisely distinguished them from Jews as an unspoilt people (Wierzyński 1934: 11–12).<sup>100</sup>

Besides being unspoiled by the Talmud, non-Karaite authors also referred to the Karaites’ zealousness in keeping to the Bible.<sup>101</sup>

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99 Syrokomla met ‘Israeli people’ in a pub on his way, which ‘a polite Karaite’ owned:

‘A legislative amendment had taken away from the Jews the privilege of selling alcoholic drinks and owning pubs in the village. However, it did not affect the Karaites, who were not accused of accidentally misusing alcohol’ (my translation).

Original:

‘W kazarmie, przy drodze, gdzie gospodarzy uczciwy Karaim Trocki, spotkamy się z tem Izraelskim plemieniem. Prawo, usuwając Żydów od wyszynku gorących napojów i trzymania karczem po wioskach, nie odebrało tego przywileju Karaimom, jako nieposzlakowanym o żadne w tej mierze nadużycia’ (Syrokomla 1858: 31–32, as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 11–18).

Although Syrokomla noticed a certain amount of poverty among the Karaites, he concluded that the reason is their ‘sluggish and lubberly character’ – which is ‘opposite to the Jewish one (Syrokomla 1858: 31–32, as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 18) (my translation).

Smokowski wrote similarly about a lack of greed among the Karaites:

‘They are not a merchant people, they do not strive for profit, enjoying the little of what they have’ (Smokowski 1858, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II: 12) (my translation)

Original:

‘Oni nie są narodem kupieckim, widoków zysku nie mają, miernem mieniem się cieszą’ (Smokowski 1858, and as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II: 12).

100 Original:

‘a więc Karaimi – to plemię izraelskie, a jednak prawo ściśle odróżnia ich od Żydów, jako “nieposzlakowanych”. A więc, jest jakaś różnica’ (Wierzyński 1934: 11–12).

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‘Zealous in keeping to the Bible, considering it distorted by Rabbanites, the Talmud and various commentaries, they [Karaites — D.M.] had a total right to consider them [the Rabbanites — D.M.] to be recreants, and, from a moral point of view, could not avoid feeling superior to them. ... However, they do not have an odious intolerance of other peoples in their dogmas, as Jews do; they have always pursued citizenship rights in any country where destiny has led them’ (Syrokomla 1857, 67–68, 79, and as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 11–18) (my translation).

Original:

‘Gorliwi w zachowaniu Biblii, widząc ją skażoną u Rabinistów przez Talmud i komentarze, mieli zupełne prawo uważać ich za odstępców, - a pod względem moralnym nie mogli nie widzieć nad nimi wyższości. Prosta ich szerota wzdygnęła się na widok motactw, które słusznie przypisali przynaturzeniu Zakonu Bożego przez Talmud. Zresztą, nie mając jak Żydzi w dogmatach swej wiary nienawistnej nietolerancji ku innym plemionom, pomimo różnicy wyznania przyjmowani uprzejmie w krajach, kędy ich los zaniósł, chętni przypuszczani byli do praw obywatelstwa’ (Syrokomla 1857, 67–68, 79, as cited in Wierzyński 1934: 11–18).

Antony Nowosielski who travelled to Crimea, wrote:

We also find remarks about the Karaites' fluency in and good pronunciation of the Polish language, which means that they were (6) well-integrated into Polish society:

The Karaites speak Polish fluently and do not distort phrases. (Smokowski 1841, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II: 12)<sup>102</sup>

Konstanty Lopato wrote:

The Karaites settled in Poland already 500 years ago and they completely integrated with the surrounding people, while at the same time retaining their language, ethnicity and customs due to their religious peculiarity. (Lopato, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska* 1935-1936: 73-79) (my translation)

Travellers also described the tidiness of the Karaites' appearance and of their houses and streets as well as their nice temperament:

A visitor to the city [Halicz – D.M.] coming to that street [Karaïnskaya street – D.M.] must have had a steadfast impression that he is in another social environment. On Karaïnskaya Street, only the Karaim language could for the most part be heard; the street was clean, the houses were white. Even from first glance, it was very different from other streets of the city and particularly from the neighbouring streets: it was like being in another world. (Zarachowicz 1924: 26-30) (my translation)<sup>103</sup>

The Karaite 'National Saga' of their positive image as honest, orderly and good citizens, their integration but not assimilation, was transferred to post-Soviet Karaite writings about their ethnic identity (see Chapter 7 of this study).

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'Educated in a spirit of the Bible, their character is noble of form; they are people like everybody else ... and [they – D.M.] keep patriarchal virtue in their families: honesty and fairness' (Stepy, morze i gory 1854: 206. Compare this with Biblioteka Warszawska 1844: 424, as cited in Kowalski 1926; Wierzyński 1934: 13) (my translation).

Original:

'Wychowani w duchu Bibliji, character ich odmalował się szlachetnie; są oni ludzcy dla wszystkich... i przechowują w swoich familjach ciche cnoty patrjarchalne: rzetelność i uczciwość' (Stepy, morze i gory 1854: 206. Compare this with Biblioteka Warszawska 1844: 424, as cited in Kowalski 1926; Wierzyński 1934: 13).

102 Original:

'Mówią (Karaimi) po polsku bardzo czysto i wyrazów nie kaleczą' (Smokowski 1841, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II: 12; see also Zajączkowski 1928: 64-65).

103 Original:

'Przyjeżdżny, zwiedzając miasto, wstąpiwszy na tę ulicę, musiał niezawodnie odnieść wrażenie, że znajduje się w zupełnie innem środowisku społecznem. Na ulicy Karaïmskiej można było usłyszeć przeważnie tylko język karaïmski, nawoływania karaïmskie, ulica też swą czystością, schudnością i bielą swych domów odróżniała się znacząco już na pierwszy rzut oka od innych ulic miasta, a w szczególności od ulic sąsiednich, słowem poznać można było, że tu inny świat' (Zarachowicz 1924: 26-30).

Bałaban wrote about the cleanliness of the Karaites as well.

Konstanty Lopato noticed the good hygiene of the Karaites and believed that the hygiene of a people depends on their cultural level and well-being (Lopatto, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska* 1935-1936: 73-79).

## Earlier Travellers' Accounts of the Karaites' Physical Appearance in *Myśl Karaïmska* as an Element of Their Ethnic Identity

The physical description of Karaites by 19<sup>th</sup>-century non-Karaite travellers, which *Myśl Karaïmska* published on quite extensively, also played an important role in the construction of the Karaite ethnic identity. Such descriptions emphasised their difference from the Jews and the allegedly noticeable Asian traits in their appearance. For example, W. Syrokomla wrote about the 'Asian outlook of the Karaite faces':

It is still possible to meet a pure Asian type among them, but the northern sun has already affected considerably the women's faces, wiped out their ancestral traits and brought them closer to the local type. (Syrokomla 1858: 35, 64, as cited in *Myśl Karaïmska*. Vol. II: 11–12)<sup>104</sup> (my translation)

Wincenty Smokowski had a quite similar opinion:

The Karaites are mostly brunettes, have a swarthy body, hooked noses, moderately protruding cheeks, while the Lithuanian Jews have different permanent features, which can be recognised easily. (Smokowski 1841, as cited in *Myśl Karaïmska*. Vol. II: 12)<sup>105</sup> (my translation)

A Karaite named Abraham Szyszman noticed that due to the special Karaite physical type, officers of the General Staff of Russia issued a special decree in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that allowed them to recruit regimental guards from among the Russian Karaites (in contrast to the Russian Rabbanites).<sup>106</sup>

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104 Original:

'Zdarza się jeszcze w ich fizyonomjach napotykać typ czysto Azyatycki, ale na wielu, mianowicie kobiecych twarzach, znaczny już wpływ północnego słońca, który zacierając rodowe cechy zbliżył ich rysy do typu miejscowego' (Syrokomla 1858: 35, 64, as cited in *Myśl Karaïmska*. Vol. II: 11–12).

105 Original:

'Karaimi w ogólności bruneci, płeć śniadawa, nos garbaty, policzki miernie wystające..., zaś żydzi litewscy mają tak uderzające w swoim rodzaju rysy twarzy, iż ze skóry odartego możnaby łatwo poznać' (Smokowski 1841, cited in *Myśl Karaïmska*. Vol. II: 12).

106 In support of this idea, Szyszman allegedly cites Kondaraki 1883:

'Among the information collected in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by officers of the General Staff about the peoples of Russia, the Karaites were included among those peoples who were allowed to serve in the guard regiments. The shape of their faces played a role in this decision. A major Manasi noticed [their faces] already in 1783 during the occupation of Dzuft-Kale by a Russian army' (Szyszman 1935–1936: 54 and his reference to Kondaraki 1883: 98–100) (my translation)

Original:

'Podług wiadomości, zebranych w drugiej połowie XIX wieku, przez oficerów Sztabu Generalnego o ludności Rosji, Karaimi byli zaliczeni do narodowości, z której składu zezwalało się na kompletowanie pułków gwardji. Na postanowienie takie, oczywiście, niepośledni wpływ miał wyraz ich twarzy, na co zwrócił uwagę jeszcze w roku 1783 major Manasi, podczas zajmowania Dzuft-Kale przez wojsko rosyjskie' (Szyszman 1935–1936: 54 and his reference to Kondaraki 1883: 98–100).

However, when I checked the book mentioned by V. Kondaraki, there was no above-mentioned citation. Besides, Szyszman referred to another description of the Asian appearance of the Karaite face in Gilbert de Lannoy's notes (an ambassador of Henry V, the king of England), who visited the capital of the Lithuanian King Vitold in 1414. However, when I checked the source, I found that there was no mention of the Karaites, only of the Tatars in de Lannoy's notes:

'There are many Tatars in Troki and in some of the neighbouring suburbs' (Gerbert de Lannoy, 43, as cited in *Myśl Karaïmska*. Vol. II. 1935–1936: 55) (my translation).



The ‘Asian’ physical characteristics of the Karaites perceived by outsiders played an important role in the construction of their ‘ethnic’ identity.

### From Religion to Ethnicity: Conceptions of Karaite Ethnic Origin by the Karaite Scholars A. Zajączkowski and S. Szapszał

As elsewhere in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, national ideologies generally replaced religious ideologies (see the theory chapter of this study). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Karaite leaders also put forward a new idea about the substance of Karaite identity, i.e. ethnicity (*narodowość*), as a better way to separate Karaite identity from the Karaite Judaism religion, especially because their religion had so often been confused with that of the Jews. For instance, Zajączkowski, in one of his articles in *Myśl Karaimska* (1928), criticised the Rabbanite historian M. Bałaban for ignoring a definition of the Karaites as constituting a particular ethnicity (*narodowość*) (Zajączkowski 1928: 35–69). Another anonymous contributor to the same periodical, Z.M., used the phrase ‘people of Turkic-Semitic origin’ (Charczenko 1925: 29–31).

However, in contrast to contemporary Crimean Karaites (who sometimes avoided the Hebrew denomination *Karaim*, preferring instead the name in the Karaite language, *Karai-Karailar*), in *Myśl Karaimska* the Polish term *Karaim* (which is similar to the Hebrew one) is much more common than the Latin form *Karait* (Janusz 1928: 70–83; Kronika naukowa 1929: 35–40), and there is no Crimean post-Soviet endonym *Karai*. For instance, Karaite Zajączkowski used the term *Karaim* in contrast to the Rabbanite scholar Bałaban, who used *Karait* in Polish-language articles (Zajączkowski 1928: 35–69).<sup>107</sup>

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Szyszman argued on this note that there were always only a few Tatars in the city, but that the Karaites had mainly lived in the fortified place since 1398. He supposed that probably a Lithuanian witnesses of de Lannoy called the Karaites ‘Tatars’ and de Lannoy just wrote down what he heard in his diary. In Szyszman’s view, Lithuanians could confuse Karaites with Tatars because the Karaites had arrived along with the Tatars from ‘Tatarland’ (i.e. Crimea) and spoke an unintelligible language, which the ambassador called ‘Tatarian’, and had a dark face colour (Szyszman 1935–1936: 55, 66).

Szyszman referred to Kondaraki, who wrote:

‘On the way, we joined a Karaite of a Jewish faith; Manasi started to speak Turkish with him. He lived in a suburb of a city referred to as a Jewish fortress (*Chufut-Kale*) [...]. It was not difficult to distinguish the Karaite and his wife from the Tatars, although their clothes and the way of life are the same. I do not find any similarity between them and the Jews [either — D.M.]. However, how did they inherit the Jewish faith or how did they come to Crimea? — they do not know by themselves. They speak Tatar with each other and have never known another dialect’ (Kondaraki 1883: 98–99) (my translation).

Original:

‘По дороге мы присоединились къ одному карайму іудейской вѣры, съ которымъ Манаси заговорилъ по турецки. Он жилъ в предмѣстьи города, называемомъ жидовскою крѣпостію (Чуфутъ кале) [...]. Карайма и жену его не трудно отличить отъ татаръ, несмотря на то, что одежда и образъ жизни у нихъ одинаковые. Я не нахожу въ нихъ ни малѣйшаго сходства съ жидами. Но какимъ образомъ они наслѣдовали жидовскую вѣру или откуда пришли въ Крымъ — этого они сами не знаютъ. Говорятъ между собою по татарски и никогда не знали другаго нарѣчія’ (Kondaraki 1883: 98–99).

<sup>107</sup> On the other hand, the Polish Turkologist Tadeusz Kowalski argued, while reviewing one of the articles by Zajączkowski (Zajączkowski 1935, as cited in *Sprawozdania i biblijografja* 1935–1936: 86–89), that Karaite scholars had rejected the term *Karaita* (pl. *Karaici*). Kowalski stated that the Polish suffix *-ita* is of Greek-Latin origin and used

In *Myśl Karaimska*, we find stronger appeals to distinguish between the Karaite religion of all Karaite communities in the world and Karaite ethnicity (the Turkic ethnicity of Eastern European Karaites versus, for instance, that of Semitic Egyptian Karaites) in the second volume of *Myśl Karaimska*. Thus, Zajęczkowski (1930–1931: 26–42) wrote that previously people had not distinguished between Karaites and Jews. In his opinion, the only similarities between them were as follows: 1) acceptance of the Pentateuch, 2) circumcision and 3) use of the Hebrew language in religious services. In his view, these similarities did not make the Karaites Jews, because Christians also accepted the Pentateuch and Muslims practised circumcision (Zajęczkowski 1930–1931: 26–42).

Thus, in this period the idea emerged that Karaite ethnicity and the Karaite religion are different notions and do not necessarily coincide. The concept was transferred to later writers and was already firmly rooted in articles by post-Soviet Karaite authors.

Karaite Ananiasz Zajęczkowski was one of the most productive scholars in Karaite studies in Poland-Lithuania after World War II. He composed a number of works on the Karaites' origin, their 'ethnogenesis', their cultural heritage, and so forth.

His ideas differed greatly from those of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Karaite writers. In contrast to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian Karaites, Zajęczkowski and other Polish Karaite writers emphasised that Karaim – the denomination of Karaite groups throughout the world – determined the Karaite religion only, but not the common ethnic origin of the Karaites (Zajęczkowski 2001: 54). This idea has been dominant among 21<sup>st</sup>-century Karaite authors, too.

Zajęczkowski supported and developed further the theory on the Turkic origin of the Karaites, which was first proposed by Russian authors in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see the previous chapter of this study). His ideas often became intertwined with those of Szapszał', the other most prominent Karaite scholar of the time. Zajęczkowski and Szapszał argued for a Karaite Turkic origin based on the Karaite language, which belongs to the Kipchak-Turkic group and Karaite Turkic traditions (Karaite folklore). Zajęczkowski wrote that the Karaite people were unique because of the combination of Kipchak-Turkic culture and the Karaite religion (similar to the Khazars, who spoke a Turkic language and professed Judaism) (Zajęczkowski 2001: 55). He explained such an extraordinary combination based on the assumption that in the Middle Ages, the Karaites had mixed with some Turkic or Turkic-speaking peoples in the Kipchak steppes (the western part of the Eurasian Steppe, including Black Sea coastal areas, where the Karaites had lived). Khazaria seemed to him to be the ethnic and political area where the Karaites had developed their culture

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to build proper nouns like *Sunnita*, *Israelita* (the corresponding suffix in English is *-ite*, like Karaite, Sunnite, Israelite, etc.); hence, it is nothing offensive because those who use it do not even know about its absurd coincidence with the Turkish *kara-it*, which means *a black dog*. However, in Poland the term *Karaim* was more common (and is still used today). The term *Karaim* had a long tradition and was used not only among the Polish Karaites, but also among their neighbours (Sprawozdania i bibliografia 1935–1936: 86–89).

(Zajączkowski 1947, reviewed in Pritsak 1949: 96–103). Zajączkowski explained the existence of a considerable amount of Muslim terms in the Karaite vocabulary by the fact that they had lived in a Muslim environment for a long time, and he ascribed such an environment to Khazaria (Zajączkowski 1947; 1961). In contrast to researchers of previous periods, Zajączkowski, Szapszał and a few other non-Karaite scholars of the same period noticed that the Cumans had also participated in the ‘ethnogenesis’ of the Karaites following the Khazars (Zajączkowski 1947; 1961). However, Zajączkowski and Szapszał still emphasised the leading role played by the Khazars in the Karaite ethnic formation.

Szapszał and Zajączkowski emphasised that in Khazar and Cuman societies, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and even paganism had coexisted. The scholars compared this phenomenon with the Karaite religious service, which included terms in Hebrew, Arabic-Persian-Muslim and Turkic-Christian. Another example, which Zajączkowski referred to, was the Cuman calendar, which had old Turkic seasonal names for the months along with Muslim and Judaic terms.<sup>108</sup> In Zajączkowski’s view, this supported his argument of the Karaites having originated from among the Cumans.

Zajączkowski (1937–1938: 90–98) also supported a Turkic theory on the origin of the Karaites based on Gustaf Peringer’s (a professor at Uppsala University) account (1691), who had visited Karaite communities in Poland and concluded that:

The Karaites differ a lot from the Jews (Rabbanites) in their traditions, religion, language and, even more, their appearance. Their mother tongue is Tatar, rather Turkic, into which they (Karaites) translate their holy books for kenasas and schools. (Peringer 1691: 572–574)<sup>109</sup> (my translation)

Peringer believed that the Karaites and Muslim Tatars had originated from the same country and had moved to Poland-Lithuania together. Peringer also emphasised a physical similarity between the Karaites and Tatars: ‘Tatars profess the religion of Mohamed; they look very similar to the Karaites’ (Peringer 1691: 574).

Zajączkowski referred to his contemporary researchers, who sought a continuation of the Khazarian cultural heritage among the Karaites. They included the Karaite S. Szyszman (1957:

<sup>108</sup> For instance, the first, middle and last months of autumn are in Turkic *küz-aj*, *orta- küz-aj* and *son- küz-aj*. There are also Muslim terms (*kurban-bajram-aj*), Christian terms (*tob-aj* – a month of atonement) and Judaic terms (*söünč-aj* — a month of happiness = Karaim *süünč-aj* = Hebrew *adar*), just as Saturday is *sabat-kün* in Karachay. According to Zajączkowski, this testified to the influence of Judaism on Turkic and other peoples in the Black Sea region, the Volga River and up to the Ural Mountains (Zajączkowski 1947; Zajączkowski 1961).

See also Zajączkowski’s reference to Munkácsi 1927: 42–64.

Two years earlier, Zajączkowski (1933, as cited in *Sprawozdania i bibliografja 1935–1936*: 89–90) had referred to the same arguments, such as that regarding the Karaites’ material culture, which at that time had not been influenced by the Slavic environment or folklore, and most importantly to the well-preserved language. Kowalski gave a positive review at that time, pointing to objectivity and references to all existing literature.

<sup>109</sup> Original:

‘Degunt illi (sc. Karaitae) in Lithuanæ variis locis, Birsæ, quod castelum est et. Oppidum ditionis Principum Radziviliorum, Pozvulæ, Neostadii, Koronæ, Trokæ, alibique, moribus, lingua, religione, immo et facie a Rabbanistis quorum faracissima est hæc region, valde diversi: lingua illis materna est Tatarica sive potius Turcica, qua etiam libros Sacros explicant in Scholis et ludis’ (Peringer 1691: 572–574).

See also Szyszman 1952: 215–228; Zajączkowski 1937–1938: 92–93.

174–221) and another scholar, Dunlop, who wrote about the Karaite having inherited their names for the week from the Khazars (Dunlop 1954: 222, 261).

Zajączkowski also proposed the notion that the modern Chuvash people were Khazar descendants in the northern part of the former Khazar empire, whereas the Karaites were their descendants in the former southern part of the Khazar empire (at that time territories of the southern Russia and Crimea). In support of his idea, Zajączkowski referred to an article by C. Gini,<sup>110</sup> which discussed the results of an Italian expedition (1934) that had studied the blood samples and physical characteristics of the Karaites and had concluded that the Crimean Karaites were close to the Chuvash people by blood composition and by physical type (Szapszał 1937–1938: 111–112). The expedition had similar results as those presented a few years earlier by Professor M. Reicher (1932) on the Karaites. Later, many post-Soviet Karaite ideologists referred to C. Gini (despite his reputation of being a fascist, a fact never mentioned by the Karaites). Zajączkowski also regarded the Lithuanian Karaites as a branch of Asian peoples who had settled in their time in Black Sea coastal area, especially in Cherson and Tavrika (Crimea). To support the thesis, he referred to contemporary Karaite settlements as far south as Dubăsari (in Moldovian Transnistria) (Zajączkowski 1937–1938: 109–110).

Zajączkowski was one of the first scholars, or maybe the second after Szapszał,<sup>111</sup> to deny a Jewish ethnic and cultural background for the Karaites in *Myśl Karaimska* (both authors published their articles with similar ideas in 1928). Zajączkowski (1928), answering Bałaban's accusation that the Karaites had allegedly claimed to be 'a branch of Judaism, while the Jews were only the remains of a large Jewish tree' (Bałaban 1927: 1–92), put forward a very bold statement:

'The Karaites have never considered themselves to be Jewish' (Zajączkowski 1928: 35–69)  
(my translation).

This categorical rejection of any Jewish element in the Karaite identity had never appeared before (Szapszał published same statement in the same year, 1928). For, instance, we cannot find such claims at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in *Karaimskaya Zhizn*. Zajączkowski emphasised that Karaites differed from Jews not only by religion and language but also by their 'anthropological type'. Thus, he divorced Karaites from Jews based on a particular ethnicity (*narodowość*). He was the first Karaite to emphasise 'the anthropological difference' between Jews and Karaites, which was very significant in his view.<sup>112</sup>

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110 C. Gini was an Italian statistician, demographer and sociologist. See the appendix 'Biographies'.

See the article by Gini:

'I Ceremissi e i Ciuvasasci presentano appunto la stessa formula BOA dei Caraimi di Polonia e Lituania' (Gini 1936: 47).

111 Szapszał's article *Kirim Karai Türkeli* was printed the same year (1928) in Constantinople.

112 In support of his statement, he referred to the results of earlier anthropological research by the non-Karaite scholar Julian Talko-Hryniewicz:

'Undoubtedly, the certain particular physical type of the Karaites and their peculiar character had been formed both by the long environmental influence they had experienced already before they arrived to our country as well as by their special way of life, occupations, customs, traditions and religion' (Talko-

Zajączkowski emphasised that the fact that Karaites had confessed Judaism did not testify to the fact that they belonged to Jewry (Zajączkowski 1928: 37). He supported his theory by referring to linguistics (as mentioned above) and to earlier research, for example to Smirnov (see the previous chapter of this study) and to a certain Grzegorz II:

Some scholars maintained that the Karaites physically differ from Israelites, due to their assimilation with other people of the East. For example, a scholar named Grzegorz II<sup>113</sup> had already referred to this fact in his work *Klasyfikacja wyznań* [Classification of Religions]. Then, A. Firkovich realised that the ethnographic enigma can be solved only if he studies Karaite sources. Thus, Firkovich only tried to find real evidence for those hypotheses to support theories using documents. (Zajączkowski 1925: 15) (my translation)

In contrast to Zajączkowski, I did not find any opinions on the non-Semitic background of the Karaites dating earlier than Firkovich's findings (see the previous chapter of this study).

Statements about the Turkic origin of the Karaites increased considerably in the second volume of *Myśl Karaimska* due to Kowalski's review (Kowalski 1929: 1–8) of Szapszał's article 'Kirim Karai Türkeli' [The Crimean Turkic Karaites] (1928). Szapszał put forward a concept about the pure Turkic origin of the Crimean, Russian and Polish Karaites (just as Zajączkowski above had). Although, as we remember, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century he wrote only about a complete assimilation of Khazars and Karaites, but not about their pure Turkic origin (Szapszał 1993: 14) (see Chapter 4). He supported his statement on the pure Turkic–Khazar origin of the Crimean Polish-Lithuanian Karaites<sup>114</sup> by the following arguments: (1) the Khazars had converted to Karaite Judaism;<sup>115</sup> (2) the linguistic and cultural closeness of Karaites and Cumans (supported by a reference to the above-mentioned 13<sup>th</sup>-century travel report by Plano Karpini, who had informed readers that some of the Cumans practised Judaism and made reference to the Karaite family name *Komän*) (Szapszał 1930–1931: 1–11); (3) the Karaite 'anthropological type' (he referred to Weissenberg's 1904 anthropological research (as cited in *Antropologia karaimov* 1911–1912: 2–29) of the Elisavetgrad Karaites (see the previous chapter); (4) Karaite folklore, which, in his view, was similar to Tatar folklore – one of the strongest arguments for their Turkic origin. Szapszał was the first to refer to Karaite folklore as an argument,<sup>116</sup> even though, before Szapszał, other authors had also referred to the Karaite way of life and clothes being similar to those of the Tatars.

Moreover, Szapszał proposed classifying the Karaites into three ethnic groups:

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Hryniewicz 1904: 97) (my translation).

113 It is not clear whom Zajączkowski meant by the name Grzegorz II (probably, J. Grzegorzewski?); he did not refer to the publication year for *Klasyfikacja wyznań*. Firkovich seemed to refer to the same writer (Grigorij II) (see previous chapter).

114 Just like other Eastern European Karaites, he believed that both the Crimean and Polish Karaites had a common origin.

115 In support of his statement, Szapszał developed a theory on the Byzantium origin of the Karaite Sangari, the legendary Jewish missionary in Khazaria. Szapszał believed that Sangari's name derived from the name of the river Sangarios in Western Anatolia. Szapszał argued for Sangari's Karaite origin based on what A. Firkovich had found: gravestones with Sangari's name and the name of his wife in Crimea. Another of Szapszał's argument, which he considered important, had to do with a report by Petahya of Regensburg (1175) (Grünhut 1904–5: 4).

116 Szapszał claimed that Karaites did not borrow their wedding customs from the Tatars, but instead had acquired them earlier. He emphasised that only the Karaites borrowed them, not the Crimean Armenians, Georgians or Jews, who also had been living for a long time on the peninsula (Szapszał 1930–1931: 1–11).

1. Karaites of Semitic origin – communities of the post-Ottoman empire.
2. Karaites of pure [sic] Turkic origin, descendants of the Khazars – communities of the post-Russian Empire: Soviet Russia, Poland, Lithuania.
3. Karaites originating from the Kuban and Astrakhan Cossacks.<sup>117</sup>

Later, Zajączkowski (1930) followed Szapszał's classification scheme and also divided Karaites into three groups (Szapszał 1934: 12):<sup>118</sup> Turkic, Slavic and Semitic Karaites.

Szapszał (1934)<sup>119</sup> also proposed a theory that Anan had spread his doctrine among the Jews in Persia, Egypt, Morocco, Syria and Turkey; while in the Black Sea area, Karaite missionaries had managed to spread their doctrine among the Turkic and Slavic peoples (Szapszał 1934: 5, and in *Sprawozdania i biblijografia* 1935–1936: 85). Later, in his view, some Turkic peoples, those who formed the Khazar Kaganate, for instance the Cumans, had participated in the Karaite 'ethnogenesis'. To support this idea, he mentioned that peoples surrounding the Karaites had not made any distinction between the Karaites and Muslim Tatars and had often called the Karaites 'Tatars'. Although he acknowledged that in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries official documents also referred to the Polish Karaites as *Judei Trocenses* or *Żydzi troccy-Karaimowie* (Troki Jews-Karaites), he assured readers that this should not be surprising since even up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century some people had called the Karaites 'Jews'. For example, one of the most well-known travellers, Edward Ostrowski, when travelling in the Kirgiz steppes had noticed that the Kirgiz way of life reminded him of that of the Polish Jews (meaning probably the Karaites) (*Listy z podróży* 1859: 204–205). As Kirgizs are a Turkic people, this account gave Szapszał a reason to regard them as relatives of the Karaites (Szapszał 1934: 5; *Sprawozdania i biblijografia* 1935–1936: 86). A year later (1935), Zajączkowski maintained that the Khazars, Cumans or Pechenegs or all them together could have contributed to the Turkic ethnic background of the Karaites (Zajączkowski 1935: 30; as

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117 Kowalski did not approve of the last group, arguing that Szapszał had confused them with the Russian Subbotniks.

In response, in a later article Szapszał clarified that he did not mean the Russian Subbotniks, but the Slavic Karaites – Cossacks from the Kuban region (*oblast'*), Astrakhan region and Zaporozhskaya region as well as Ukraine (Szapszał 1930–1931: 1–11. See also below in this chapter).

In his words, they had been confessing Karaism and had accepted all its dogmas since ancient times. Szapszał stated that those Slavic Karaites had always maintained contacts with the Crimean Karaites (*Karaimskiy calendar* 1918: 50; *Izvestiya karaimskogo Duhovnogo Pravleniya* 1917: 55–56). (As a matter of fact, certain individual Karaites may have corresponded from time to time with those Subbotniks about religious issues. However, the Karaites had never established official relations with them, probably wary of possible accusations of being Jewish in the propaganda disseminated by Russian officials at the time.) (See *Russkie-karaimy* 1912: 86.) To support his theory, Szapszał referred to the name *Karaim*, which allegedly means a robber and was used in some parts of Lesser Poland. Szapszał also reminded readers that the Kuban Cossacks had originated from Zaporozhye. Besides, Szapszał argued that there were some Karaites among the Ukrainian Zaporozhye Cossacks, for example a famous Karaite Cossack named Ilya Karaimowicz (Szapszał 1930–1931: 1–11).

In fact, according to *Russkie-Karaimy* the Karaites were indeed Russian converts to Judaism, Subbotniks or *Iudeystvuyushchie*. Later, they registered as Russian-Karaims (*Russkie-Karaimy*). They lived in a village called Privolnoe, close to a station called Prishib (*Russkie-karaimy* 1912: 86).

118 Mardkowicz, besides writing of 'indigenous' Karaite communities, also mentioned neophyte Karaite communities in the Don and Volga areas of Russia. Zajączkowski, in contrast, did not agree with the term 'indigenous' Karaite communities because, in his opinion, three different ethnic groups of Karaites existed: Turkic, Slavic and Semitic Karaites (Mardkowicz 1930: 20, as cited in *Kronika naukowa* 1930–1931: 68–70).

119 This article was reviewed in *Sprawozdania i biblijografia* (1935–1936: 85–86).

cited in *Sprawozdania i bibliografia* 1935–1936: 86–89). This statement served as the basis for a long list of Karaite ancestors in the post-Soviet Crimean Karaite writings.

### Non-Karaite Scholars on the Turkic Origin of the Karaites in the Pages of *Myśl Karaimska*

The differing physical characteristics of the Karaites and Jews mentioned by some anthropologists was a very convincing argument not only for the Karaites but also for some non-Karaite scholars. For instance, P.W. Nikolskij (1924, as cited in *Sprawozdania i bibliografia* 1935–1936: 102–103) studied views on the Karaite ‘ethnogenesis’ by both Tatar scholars and Jewish scholars (*Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II. 1929: 37–42; 1930–1931: 63–67; ‘Issledovanie nekotoryh’ 1919). He did not identify the Karaites with the Jews due to the allegedly significant physical differences between the Russian Karaites and Jews. In his words, the difference was so explicit that any local inhabitant could easily have distinguished a Karaite from a Jew (Nikolskij 1924: 43).

The topic of ‘anthropological type’ with respect to the Karaites was developed more profoundly in a new series of articles in *Myśl Karaimska*, which started publication again after the war ended in 1945 and was intended more for academic circles. A long detailed article by Polish scholar Jan **Czekanowski** (1946–1947: 3–23), a professor at the University of Lublin,<sup>120</sup> dedicated to the ‘anthropology’ of the Karaites completed the new series in *Myśl Karaimska*. Czekanowski agreed with a previous researcher, Reicher (who belonged to a group of fascist ideologists), that the Karaites differed a great deal from the European type of appearance and that they represented an Asian group, while the Jews represented a European group. He regretted that these descendants of Turkic peoples had not been studied systematically by anthropologists, linguists or ethnographers. The author believed that previously the Karaites had not been as anthropologically isolated as they were in his time, citing their different blood group type as evidence. He also referred to the relationship between the Polish Karaites and Chuvash people, which other scholars, for instance Zajęczkowski, had mentioned before. He noted that the Polish and Crimean Karaites had different ‘anthropological characteristics’ than the Egyptian Karaites. He believed that the Khazars had participated in ‘ethnogenesis’ of the Polish and Crimean Karaites to such a significant extent that they (the Khazars) could be considered the main ancestors of Eastern European Karaites, whereas the Egyptian Karaites had no Khazar genes.

The post-Soviet Karaite ideologists writing at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see, for example, *Karai (Krymskie karaimy)* 2000: 43–44), supporters of the Turkic origin of the Karaites, often referred to Czekanowski's article. Czekanowski, on the other hand, referred to the results of studies by the fascist ideologists Reicher and Gini as well as to the work of the Russian scholars Zabolotny and Weissenberg.

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<sup>120</sup> See the appendix ‘Biographies’.

A later issue of *Myśl Karaimska* (1934) published an article by Wierzyński (1934: 11–18), who also stressed not identifying the Karaites with the Jews merely based on their acceptance of the Pentateuch, practice of circumcision and usage of Hebrew words in the liturgy. He wrote that the Karaites were [!] Israeli people in the past, but as for now:

Can we consider our Karaites to be ‘Israeli people’ if they speak a Turkic language (by the way, ‘the language represents the people’), have kept the peculiar features of their character and temperament until nowadays and their special business? Or is it ‘a Jewish sect, rejecting the Talmud’, as is written in all encyclopaedias, even in the modern ones? (Wierzyński 1934: 13)

He argued that the Karaites were not Semites by origin, but descendants of the Khazars and Cumans, who had settled in southern Russia in the first centuries AD and had converted to Karaism (Wierzyński 1934: 14).<sup>121</sup> The first author who listed the Cumans among the Karaites’ ancestors in *Myśl Karaimska* was Grzegorzewski (1924); Szapszał, Zajączkowski and Kowalski (1928) then repeated this idea (see below). This idea would appear in many subsequent articles published in *Myśl Karaimska* and in contemporary articles by Polish-Lithuanian Karaite authors. To justify listing the Cumans among the Karaites’ ancestors, the above-mentioned authors often referred to *Plano Karpini’s Travel Report* from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which stated that some Cumans had professed Judaism). Wierzyński believed that the Crimean as well as the Polish and Lithuanian Karaites (who had allegedly originated from the Crimean Karaites) were Turks. He explained his view based on the Karaite anthropological type, which was allegedly close to that of the Bashkirs, and the Turkic vernacular. Besides, he did not find any ‘Palestinian’ traces in the Karaite folklore, but only pure Turkic traits, for instance in their wedding customs.<sup>122</sup>

Kowalski did not support all of Szapszał’s points. He especially took issue with the idea that the Khazars in Crimea had professed a Karaite form of Judaism and the Khazar theory of the Karaite origins, which, in his view, had yet to be proven. However, he did not exclude the possibility that the Karaites’ ancestors could have been either Khazars or later arrivals to the Crimean Peninsula, such as the Cumans (Kowalski 1929: 1–8). Kowalski was not the first to mention the Cumans (see the discussion on Grzegorzewski above), but his authority was more significant. That is why it became popular for post-Soviet authors to refer to Kowalski when they mentioned the Karaites’ Cuman ancestors (Kowalski 1929: 1–8). However, Kowalski criticised Szapszał for going too far in claiming that the Karaites had a pure Turkic origin. He noticed that

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121 Original:

‘Nie są oni z pochodzenia nawet Semitami, bo wywodzą się od Charorów i Kumanów, którzy w pierwszych wiekach po Chrystusie zamieszkali dzisiejszą południową Rosję i przyjęli wyznanie Karaimów’ (Wierzyński 1934: 14).

122 Original:

‘W każdym razie Karaimi rosyjscy, krymscy i pochodzący od nich polscy są plemieniem tureckim, co stwierdzają wybitni historycy i etnografowie. Rasowo zbliżeni do Baszkirów używają w potocznej mowie języka tureckiego, wprowadzonego częściowo i do służby Bożej. Wreszcie folklor nie ma w sobie nic palestyńskiego, odnajduje się w nim raczej pierwiastki czysto tureckie, jak to widoczne z obrzędów weselnych’ (Wierzyński 1934: 14).



Szapszał contradicted himself by referring several times to the Semitic roots of the Karaites in his article (sic!). Kowalski asserted that already the first Karaite missionaries were of a Semitic origin, and they had also mixed with Jews on the Crimean Peninsula later. Kowalski believed that the fact that a large volume of Karaite writings were in Hebrew would have been impossible to explain if the Karaites did not have any Jewish background at all. He also stressed the fact that the Karaite language used to be an everyday or vernacular language, but that it had been elevated to the status of an academic and scientific language only in the modern time under the influence of nationalistic feelings (sic!) (Kowalski 1929: 1–8).

Nevertheless, despite arguing for a Semitic element in the Crimean Karaite's blood, Kowalski did not dissuade them from their right to consider themselves to be Turkic:

Crimean Karaites are undoubtedly a Turkic people by their origin and culture. And they want that others also consider them as such. Some Jewish authors respect the Karaite protest to be considered Jewish. However, a persistent protest of others tells only about a lack of basic knowledge about the history and culture of the Karaite people. (Kowalski 1929: 1–8)

At the same time, Kowalski, who was not Karaite himself, appealed for the need to distinguish between the Karaite religion and Karaite ethnicity in the pages of *Myśl Karaimska* – as Zajęzkowski had done before him (see above). Such appeals had an effect, since this distinction became firmly entrenched in post-Soviet Karaite publications. He dedicated his work *Lehistanda Türkler* [Turks in Poland] (1935, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska* 1935–1936: 103–104) to the Tatars and Karaites because he considered the Karaites to be a Turkic people and thereby emphasised their similarity to other Turkic peoples:

They are part of a great Turkic people, which is widespread across a wide territory from Siberia to Europe. (Kowalski 1929: 5) (my translation)

Kowalski was not the only non-Karaite scholar to distinguish between the Karaite religion and Karaite ethnicity (*narodowość*). For example, the Polish Catholic X. Nikodem Ludomir Cieszyński also expressed a similar opinion:

It is not surprising that in old times, they [the Karaites – D.M.] were not always distinguished from Jews in Poland... but it is worse if this mistake is repeated in religious encyclopaedias, or if a professional historian of the Jewish people, like Majer Bałaban, claims that the Karaites are only a fraction of Jewry... Whereas the Karaites clearly differ from the Jews... by their origin, *ethnicity* (italics – D.M.) and language. The misunderstanding came from the acceptance of the Pentateuch by the Karaites, the rule of circumcision and usage of the Hebrew language in the liturgy. So what? Christian confessions also accept the Pentateuch of Moses and non-Jewish peoples practice circumcision as well; however, a religious confession or a people do not emerge from those traditions.<sup>123</sup> (Cieszyński 1930, as cited in *Kronika naukowa* 1930–1931: 59–71) (my translation)

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123 Original:

‘Nie dziwić się, że w dawnych wiekach w Polsce nie zawsze ich od żydów odróżniano,... ale gorszej już, jeśli się to powtarza w encyklopedjach kościelnych, albo jeżeli fachowy historyk żydostwa jak Majer Bałaban twierdzi, że oni są tylko odłamem żydostwa... Tymczasem Karaimi wyraźnie się oddzielają od żydów... poporostu i pochodzeniem i językiem i narodowością od nich się różnią. Nieporozumienie poszło stąd, że Karaimi uznają Pięcioksiąg Mojżesza, podlegają prawu obrzezania i w liturgii używają języka hebrajskiego. Toć i chrześcijańskie wyznania uznają Pięcioksiąg Mojżesza, toć i inne narody nieżydowskie mają prawo obrzezania, więc z pewnej wspólności wierzeń czy zwyczajów nie wynika wspólność wiary czy narodowości’ (Cieszyński 1930, as cited in *Kronika naukowa* 1930–1931: 59–71).

The above citation demonstrates that already in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Karaites wanted outsiders to consider them as a Turkic people.

### Japhetic theory

Another interesting idea about Karaite origins published in *Myśl Karaimska* is the so-called Japhetic theory (a theory on the common origin of the Caucasian, Semitic-Hamitic and Basque languages). The first scholar who put forward such an idea was the well-known Russian scholar N.J. Marr (1864–1934). Then, another Russian scholar living abroad, A. **Baschmakoff** (1858–1943), lent his support to it.<sup>124</sup> However, not all European scholars accepted the theory. After the death of Marr, the interest in his Japhetic theory of origins decreased even in Russia. Bashmakoff brought the theory back to life by applying it to the Karaites. According to his revised version of the theory, the Karaites constituted a particular ethnic group or people. Similar to Zajączkowski, he did not consider their religion to be the main factor in their identity, contrary to the way the Karaites were defined in dictionaries and encyclopaedias at the time. Bashmakoff regretted that quite a few authors writing about the Karaites used such encyclopaedias as their sources. The editorship of *Myśl Karaimska* assessed his theory as original and new to the scholarly literature of that time (Bashmakoff 1937, as cited in Bibliografia Wydawnictwa Włoskie 1937–1938: 112–113).

Bashmakoff was the first to propose an original theory that the Crimean Tatars and Karaites were both descendants of the Tauro-Cimmerians, and hence, of the local inhabitants of Crimea. That is how he brought together the Karaites and Tatars and laid the foundation for claims by post-Soviet Karaite ideologists of a Karaite ‘indigenous’ status in Crimea together with the Tatars. He applied a theory of Crimean Tatar ‘ethnogenesis’ to the Crimean Karaites. Besides advocating a common origin for the Karaites and the Crimean Tatars (or Yalta Tatars, i.e. Yalibou Tats or Coastal Tats living on the southern coast), he assumed that the Cherkesses were also descendants of the Cimmerians. Thus, he derived a common origin for people from the Northern Caucasus and the Crimean Peninsula.<sup>125</sup> In support of his theory, Bashmakoff maintained that the Karaites had

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N.L. Cieszynski also noted that earlier, in the times of the famous explorer and traveller Evliya Chelebi, it had been normal to call the Karaites ‘Jews’:

‘All of them are Jews, confessing Karaism...’, wrote E. Chelebi (Cieszynski 1930, as cited in Kronika naukowa 1930–1931: 67) (my translation).

124 A.A. Bashmakoff (1858–1943) was a Russian writer, ethnographer, lawyer and anthropologist. See more in the appendix ‘Biographies’.

125 In support of his idea, Bashmakoff listed such Karaite names as Abaza, Czerkies and Majkapar. Bashmakoff also mistakenly thought that the name Crimea derived from the name for the Cimmerians as well as from the name *Karaim*. Szpyszaldid not agree with Bashmakoff’s last point and emphasised instead that the name *Karaim* has a religious connotation and is used for all Karaites of the world (Bashmakoff 1937, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II. 1937–1938: 113–114).

Two years before Bashmakoff’s work was published, he read a paper called *Les origines ethniques des Caraimes de Crimée* (as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II. 1937–1938: 113), which became the introduction to the above

borrowed the Turkic language from the Cumans in the 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries, thus earlier than Tatars had during the Ottoman period in Crimea. Moreover, in the author's opinion the shape of the Karaite cranium was closer to the Turkic type than to that of the Tatars, and that could be explained by the mixing of the Karaites and Turks (Bashmakoff 1937, as cited in Bibliografia Wydawnictwa Włoskie 1937–1938: 112–113).

Bashmakoff was probably one of the first to mention a report by Pallas (1801: 35) about a very respectable attitude toward oaks in the Karaite graveyard of *Balta-tiymez* and a fear of cutting them down. (Note that he used the Turkic term for the graveyard – *Balta-tiymez* – ‘an axe won't touch [them – oaks]’, which became a popular name among contemporary Karaites authors instead of the original Hebrew name *Vale of Jehoshaphat*.) Bashmakoff believed that this kind of attitude was an echo of the cult of ‘holy oaks’ practised by local peoples in Crimea. As evidence, he mentioned the ‘Khazar mission’ of Cyril and his report on certain local people who confessed Christianity but still made pagan sacrifices under a large oak (Malyshevskiy 1886: 63; *Myśl Karańska* 1937–1938: 115–116). That was yet one more argument for Bashmakoff to consider the Karaites as indigenous people of Crimea because they allegedly had a cult of ‘sacred groves’. He mentioned that the Chuvash people, whom he considered to be descendants of the Khazars, used to have ‘sacred groves’ too (Ragozin 1881: 148, as cited in *Myśl Karańska* 1937–1938: 115–116).<sup>126</sup>

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reviewed work.

<sup>126</sup> Szapszał acknowledged Bashmakoff's contribution, but even he warned against complete reliance on the theory and criticised certain aspects of it (*Myśl Karańska*. Vol. II. 1937–1938: 118).

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was an interest in the Khazars and their relationship with the Karaites, hence quite a few articles were published on the topic (Kronika naukowa 1934: 106). Thus, Ilja Kodzak (Kodzak 1932, as cited in Kronika naukowa 1934: 107–108), in trying to clarify the origin of the Karaites, quoted Ernest Renan's statement that the Turkic-Turkish name *Tohtamysh* on an 8<sup>th</sup>-century monument testified to the Khazar origin of the Karaites (Renan 1883, as cited in Kronika naukowa 1934: 107). As to the name *Karaim*, Kodzak believed that its connotation meant only an affiliation with religion, but was not a reference to ethnicity. The author was a strong supporter of the Khazar theory regarding Karaite origins; he pointed to an allegedly eye-striking physical similarity between the Caucasian Kumyks and the Crimean Karaites. In addition, he referred to the similarity between the languages of the two peoples. Szapszał supported the statement, noting that some scholars had already put forward a theory about the Khazarian origin of the Kumyks in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (S. Szapszał referred to Klaproth, who was the first to put forward such a theory about the Khazar origin of the Kumyks (see Klaproth 1812). Then, J.J. Pantiuchow (1895: 46) and others stated the same opinion. However, Szapszał emphasised that Kodzak did not know about the previous research, and thus his conclusions were even more valuable.

A fictional dialogue between two Karaite scholars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, David ben Shalom, a hazzan from Lutsk, and a prominent Mordechaj named ben Nisan, was mentioned in a book by the Karaite writer Aleksander Mardkowicz, which reflected the heated debate on Karaite origins at that time (Mardkowicz 1933, as cited in Kronika naukowa 1934: 112). Mordechaj ben Nisan believed in the Jewish origin of the Karaites. His opponent, David, wrote a thesis on the Turkic origins of the Polish, Lithuanian and Crimean Karaites. He pointed out the main differences between the Karaites and Jews, such as language, anthropological type and personal character.

Other authors discussing the ethnic belonging of Karaites included Dr. M. Allerhand (Allerhand 1931: 1–17, as cited in Kronika naukowa 1934: 114–115.), who, when talking about the origin of the Karaites, stated that because of their long isolation, the Karaites had established their own language and religion; for this reason, they should be considered a particular ethnic group (*ein besonderer Volksstamm*).

Two Turkish authors, Kara Şemsi and Raşid Saffet (Şemsi & Saffet 1934, as cited in *Myśl Karańska* 1935–1936: 104–105) visited Poland to study local peoples of Turkic origin. They visited the Karaites in Troki (see notes in *Myśl Karańska*. Vol. II. 75–77). The result was a book that began with a history of the Turkic Khazars and ended with ‘the modern Khazaro-Turks, i.e. Karaites’. As to arguments about the Turkic ethnic background of the Karaites, they referred to the names of the months in the Karaite calendar and to the Karaim language.

Abdullah Zihni Soysal also supported the Khazar origin of the Karaites (1938: 8, as cited in *Myśl Karańska* Vol. II. 1937–1938: 136). In support, he referred to Szapszał's article (1929).

Gedo Necht expressed quite confused ideas about the origin of the Karaites (Necht 1938: 40, as cited in *Myśl Karańska*. Vol. II. 1937–1938: 129). Zajczkowski criticised the author for not distinguishing between the Karaite

## Karaite Arts as Evidence of Their Ethnic Origin

The Polish art historian Marian Morelowski (see the appendix 'Biographies') referred to Karaite artwork as offering a unique argument on the origin of the Crimean and Polish-Lithuanian Karaites. This argument was never mentioned by any other authors before or since (Morelowski 1934: 37–87). The author considered Crimean and Polish-Lithuanian Karaites to be exclusive because they retained an exceptional purity of blood, have long abstained from mixed marriages ('it is only possible to be born a Karaite' – a principle that the Karaites do not ascribe to today) (Morelowski 1934: 37–87). In Morelowski's view, Karaite artwork could tell much about their origins. The scholar used comparative methods, which, in his opinion, could have been used in research on any ethnic group whose artwork was similar. The author was sure that if two groups have similar characteristics in their artwork, then they are most likely ethnically related or have a common origin. However, if the similarities are accidental, such research would be even more significant because it would show that the groups are 'pure' by their ethnic origin. Nevertheless, the scholar suggested relying on the results from artwork only if they are supported by arguments from other fields. He assured readers that since ancient times, the Crimean Karaites had been using the same basic elements of composition and the same principal conceptions in their art, which they had brought with them from remote Asian Turkic settlements to the Crimean Peninsula.<sup>127</sup>

Morelowski was convinced that a significant difference between the Jews and Karaites was reflected in their textile art.<sup>128</sup> He noticed that although the Jews had lost their contacts with the Persian land after they had moved to Poland and Lithuania, they had retained the Old Persian style in their decorative art until contemporary times, just as the Karaites had retained the Turkic style (Morelowski 1934: 46). Grave monuments demonstrated another difference between the Jews and Karaites, in his opinion. He believed that such a difference was the result of different religious views on the concept of death. According to the Karaite doctrine, death is a separation from the Earthly life, which is connected with nature. That is why the Karaites avoid using any ornaments derived from nature on their grave stones. In contrast, the Jews love plastic arts and use nature motifs (Morelowski 1934: 47–49).

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religion and Karaite ethnicity, because he wrote about 'Karaite ethnic communities' in Africa. Zajęczkowski was also bothered by Necht's remark that, 'until recent times, anthropologists considered the Karaites to be a Jewish sect' (Necht 1938: 40, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II. 1937–1938: 129). While Necht presented a range of opinions in the issue regarding Karaite origins, he generally supported their Khazar origin. However, he mistakenly related the Khazars to a Finnish tribe, thinking that the Finnish tribes were relatives of the Mongolian tribes and, in their turn, the Mongolians were relatives of the Turkic peoples. Moreover, at the end of the article, Gedo Necht included a picture of a group of Jewish youth visiting a Karaite graveyard with the caption 'Fragment of the Karaite graveyard in Troki'. This could easily have disorientated readers, who might have thought that those persons in the picture were Karaites (Necht 1938: 40, as cited in *Myśl Karaimska*. Vol. II. 1937–1938: 129).

127 The author believed that the issue of the Polish Karaites having originally migrated from Crimea did not even have to be discussed because it was generally acknowledged among scholars. That was why, in his view, even if he did not have Karaite textiles from Troki, he could have used textile material from Crimea instead (Morelowski 1934: 45).

128 Similar to previous authors, he believed that misunderstandings concerning the origin of the Crimean Karaites stemmed from the common use of the Old Testament and Hebrew in religious services by both the Karaites and Jews.

Morelowski also noticed that the Crimean Karaites had a different method of producing textiles, one similar to the Turkestani, but not to any European groups. The scholar believed that if there were no signs of similarity in ornamental arts, then no relationship existed between the Karaites and European peoples; therefore, he was making an argument for the Asian origin of the Crimean Karaites. In his view, Karaite textiles were also somewhat similar to Bulgarian textiles (although not as similar as to Turkestani textiles) – proto-Bulgarians were of Turkic-Tatar origin (Morelowski 1934: 54–79).

Thus, Morelowski concluded that the ethnic relationship between the Crimean-Polish Karaites and Turks was based on the similarity between the ornaments and methods of production of Karaite and Turkic textiles (Morelowski 1934: 79).<sup>129</sup>

As mentioned previously in this chapter, views on the ethnic origin of the Polish Karaites in *Myśl Karaimska* had evolved gradually from assumptions on their Turkic origin in the article by the Polish non-Karaite ethnographer Jan Grzegorzewski (1924: 9–10),<sup>130</sup> when the editorship did not agree with all of the author's ideas but published it nonetheless, to academic anthropological research on the Turkic origin of the Karaites by Jan Czekanowski, printed in the last issue of *Myśl Karaimska* (Czekanowski 1946–1947: 1–13).

The views of the Polish ethnographer, Orientalist and Slavist Grzegorzewski (1924), published in the first issue of *Myśl Karaimska*, were similar to the statements made by the Russian Orientalist Smirnov at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Firkovich, Z.A. 1890; see Chapter 3). However, the Polish scholar added the Cumans as ancestors of the Karaites in addition to the Khazars (Grzegorzewski 1924: 9–10). He was probably the first to mention the Cumans among the ancestors of the Karaites. Earlier, scholars of the late Russian Empire had not referred to the Cumans when writing about the ethnic origin of the Karaites. For example, there was no reference to the Cumans in *Karaïmskaya Zhizn* or in earlier sources. In contrast, contemporary Polish-Lithuanian Karaite ideologists always mentioned the Cumans together with the Khazars (see Chapter 7 of this study). Grzegorzewski emphasised that Turkic- and Arabic- speaking Karaites did not have a common ethnic origin, only a common religion – Karaism and the sacred language of Hebrew (Grzegorzewski 1924: 9–10). Contemporary Karaite writers also commonly use this statement in their writings (see Chapter 7).

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129 In the afterword to the article to confirm his conclusions, the author referred to works by anthropologists Czekanowski, who considered Polish Karaites as Turkic people, and Reicher, who studied the structure of blood of the Polish Karaites (of the Crimean origin) and revealed their similarity with the Turkic ethnic group (Reicher 1932.). Morelowski was influenced by different studies about Karaite Turkic origin, and he was convinced that other independent studies, such as philological, historical studies, biological studies of blood, studies on the culture and folklore of Karaites, all came to the same conclusions that Karaites belong to the Turkic ethnic group (Morelowski 1934: 81–87).

130 See more on Jan Grzegorzewski in the appendix 'Biographies'.

## Conclusion

After 1917, the Russian Empire ceased to exist, resulting in hardships for the Karaites in the former territories of the empire. Hence, Karaite publishing activity moved to the newly created states of Poland and Lithuania. The change ushered in a new period in Karaite self-identification, a transition towards secular Turkic self-identification, which had already begun in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Similar to other ethnic and national movements (see Hroch's theory in chapters 2 and 8 of this study), Karaite and Polish scholars created a new Turkic self-identification in the pages of Karaite publications with the aim of transferring such ideas to the general public. *Myśl Karaimska* played one of the main roles in the Turkification of Karaite identity. At the same time, it mirrored changing notions of Karaite identity; it was an instrument in the process of building a new Karaite ethnic identity in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The periodical gave a clear picture of how gradually, but at times quite quickly, the process of replacing a religious identity with ethnic one took place. One of the reasons for the transition towards a secular Turkic identity was the influence of a patriotic spirit and nation-building efforts in highly nationalistic Poland and Lithuania. Another reason might have been the anti-Semitic climate in Europe in the interwar period.

Progressive-minded Karaite leaders actively produced new theories on the Turkic origin of the Karaites (especially from the end of 1929, when Zajączkowski and Szapszał became the main editors of *Myśl Karaimska*) and stirred up national feelings among the Karaites. They proposed new theories and emphasised new arguments (folklore, linguistic – names of the months) regarding Karaite particularity compared with those made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (religion, language). In comparison with the previous Russian imperial period, Karaites in the Polish-Lithuanian interwar period almost completely abandoned a Judeo-religious identification. Non-Karaite scholars, mostly Turkologists (especially T. Kowalski) and anthropologists, who were interested in the unique Turkic Karaite language, culture and anthropological type also contributed to the process of Turkifying the Karaites. *Myśl Karaimska* shows how successfully the Karaites (re-)created their ethnic identity.

Karaite and non-Karaite scholars (Zajączkowski, Szapszał, Kowalski, Bashmakoff, Dr M. Allerhand and others) elaborated on the idea of the Karaites as a particular ethnic group and of the ethnic differences between Karaite religious groups of the world. In the post-Soviet period, Karaite ideologists would take up their ideas and develop them further (see Chapter 7 of the study).

The Cumans appeared in this period as Karaite ancestors in addition to the Khazars, whom Grzegorzewski had first mentioned in 1924, followed by the Karaite scholars Zajączkowski and Szapszał in 1928; later, this belief was repeated by non-Karaite writers. Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Polish-Lithuanian ideologists would begin to list not only the Cumans but also the Polovtsi along with the Khazars among Karaite ancestors.

In the interwar period, several scholars (Kowalski, Bashmakoff) began collaboratively studying the Karaites and Tatars. Bashmakoff regarded both peoples to be the 'indigenous' inhabitants of Crimea. This idea is still mentioned by scholars. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Karaite ideologists began increasingly basing their works on the studies done during this period.

## Chapter 6. Interlude. Karaite Studies during the Soviet Period

The revolution of 1917 was tragic for many peoples in the Russian Empire, especially the Crimean Karaites. Being prosperous merchants, manufacturers and loyal subjects of the Empire, they suffered more than others. The new ruling Bolshevik Party deprived them of their homes and public buildings and of the possibility to confess their religion; some were shot or perished in the chaotic events of the revolutionary period; many of them joined the White Guards fighting to save the Empire; others emigrated to Turkey, France, Germany and other countries. Those who survived had to now assume the status of Soviet citizen (Kizilov 2011: 289–294, 297–30). The Karaite population decreased from 12 894 in 1897 (*Pervaya Vseobshchaya perepis'* 1905) (and about 13 600 in 1913) (Sarach and Kazas 2000. Part 1. Vol. 6: 27) to 8 324 in 1926 (*Vsesoyuznaya perepis'* 1928–29), and it continued to drastically decline during the Soviet period from 1920 to 1991 (5 727 Soviet Karaites in 1959,<sup>131</sup> 4 571 in 1970,<sup>132</sup> 3 341 in 1979,<sup>133</sup> 2 602 in 1989<sup>134</sup>). Although the decline was implicitly drastic, we should keep in mind the various methods of counting (how the question 'who is a Karaite?' was answered in certain periods). The first census conducted in the Russian Empire gave us the name Karaite based on a religious definition. However, all subsequent Soviet censuses were based on how persons self-identified; hence, we should take into account the frequent number of mixed marriages in Soviet times and the influence of political factors (see below), when many Karaites probably preferred to hide their real identity and registered as Russians.

However, there was a positive side to ethnic policy in the first years after the revolution. The new government realised quite well that one of the reasons for the disintegration of the Russian Empire was its unsuccessful national policy, in which the interests of non-Russian ethnicities had been ignored. That is why after the revolution, the Provisional Government (March–July 1917) made an attempt to resolve 'the ethnic question'. The Bolsheviks lifted confessional and ethnic limitations, started preparing a language reform and considered the possibility of extending self-government to certain ethnic groups.<sup>135</sup> They carried out cultural and language reforms: they established ethnic schools with studies in native languages and published newspapers, periodicals

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131 RGAE RF (byv. TSGANH SSSR), fond 1562, opis' 336, ed. khr. 1566a-1566d (Tables 3 and 4 *Raspredelenie naseleniya po natsional'nosti i rodnomu yazyku*).

132 RGAE RF, fond 1562, opis' 336, ed. khr. 3998-4185 (Table 7c. *Raspredelenie naseleniya po natsional'nosti, rodnomu i vtoromu yazyku*).

133 RGAE RF, fond 1562, opis' 336, ed. khr. 6174-6238 (Table 9c. *Raspredelenie naseleniya po natsional'nosti i rodnomu yazyku*).

134 Rabochiy arkhiv Goskomstata Rossii (Table 9c. *Raspredelenie naseleniya po natsional'nosti i rodnomu yazyku*).

135 Although, these activities were too late to satisfy ethnic leaders and the revolution had already angered various strata of society in the outlying districts of the former empire. However, national minorities 'the inner Russia', having obtained ethnic self-government, supported the Bolsheviks, a factor contributing to their victory in the Civil War.



and fiction books in local languages. In the 1920s, the Bolsheviks continued in the same direction, implementing the *Korenizatsia* policy (from Russian *koren'* – root, literally 'rooting', meaning 'nativisation' or 'indigenisation'), a Soviet nationalities policy designed to support and develop the cultures and languages of non-titular (i.e. non-Russian) nationalities and minorities. The purpose was the introduction of local languages into all spheres of public life and the usage of local languages to the greatest possible extent, particularly in education, publishing, culture and government (Shalygin 2010). Within the context of this ethnic policy, there was increasing interest in the ethnic minorities of multinational Crimea, including the Karaites, during the first years of the Soviet regime (Polkanov 1995: 3). Karaite culture was studied within the framework of numerous ethnographic expeditions, launched by The Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of the Borderlands of Russia (*Komissiya po izucheniyu plemennogo sostava naseleniya SSSR*) (established as a part of the Russian Academy of Science in 1917). The results were published by the Commission in its proceedings (1917–1930) (*Trudy komissii 1917–1930*). In this publication, the Karaites were placed in the section on 'Turks' (*Typku*) (*Spisok narodnostey 1927*: 21, 27), whereas the Krymchaks were placed in the section on 'Semites'.

In the 1930s, national politics in the USSR took a turn for the worse. Already in 1930, Stalin had proclaimed that the ultimate goal would be to create an international workers' culture with a common language (Sixteenth Party Congress 1931). So, at the beginning of the 1930s, the *Korenizatsia* campaign was largely abandoned and the 'struggle against bourgeois nationalism' began, with purges launched against the leaderships of the national republics.<sup>136</sup> At the end of the 1930s, a policy of Russification and attempts to assimilate the various minorities began. Ethnic social organisations were eliminated, and it was difficult to openly study different cultures. Moreover, the number of officially recognised nationalities was greatly reduced in the 1939 census compared with the 1926 census. The Karaites disappeared from the list of ethnicities.<sup>137</sup> (However, in the next All-Union censuses of 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1989 they appeared once again.) Nevertheless, preparation for the publication of academic entries with the summarising of previously accumulated materials continued. Thus, an article on the Karaites was published in *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*). Unfortunately, the Great Patriotic

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136 The charge against non-Russians was that they had instigated national strife and oppressed the Russians or other minorities in the republics. Although the purges had started earlier, in 1937 it was proclaimed that local elites had become hired agents and their goal had become the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the restoration of capitalism. From 1930s onwards, the central press started to praise the Russian language and Russian culture. Mass campaigns were organised to denounce the 'enemies of the people'. 'Bourgeois nationalists' were new enemies of the Russian people, who had helped suppress the Russian language. The policy of indigenisation was abandoned. In the following years, the Russian language became a compulsory subject in all Soviet schools.

'The pre-revolution era Russian nationalism was also rehabilitated. Many of the heroes of Russian history were glorified. The Russian people became the "elder brother" of the "Socialist family of nations"' (Vihavainen 2000: 84).

137 RGA (byv. TSANKh SSSR), fond 1562, opis' 336, ed.khr. 966–1001 (Razrabotochnaya tablitsa f. 15A. *Natsional'nyy sostav po SSSR, respublikam, oblastyam, rayonam*).

War interrupted the work in 1941, and no other summary publication on the Crimean Karaites appeared during that time.<sup>138</sup>

During World War II, the Karaites were more fortunate than the Jews because the Nazis did not target them for extermination. Already before the war, on 5 January 1939, the Department of Genealogical Studies (Die Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung (RFS)) concluded on the basis of a petition by the heads of Paris and Berlin communities (as well as the publications by Szapszał, Firkovich, Mardkovich and other Polish-Lithuanian Karaites) that the Karaites were not Jews. However, they did so after much hesitation and, hence, the Nazis have never agreed on the question completely and continued to study it until the end of the war (Kizilov 2011: 305).

In Nazi-occupied Simferopol, the Russian scholar A.I. Polkanov<sup>139</sup> wrote the first Russian language review of the Karaites. This significantly influenced the content of the work (Polkanov 1995). This publication deserves special attention because many modern Crimean Karaite writers continue to reference the work. I am going to look briefly at the prehistory of the work's composition (which was presented in the introduction to the work by Yu.A. Polkanov, A.I. Polkanov's son) due to its great impact on the character of the publication. A.I. Polkanov worked in the regional museum in Crimea when the war started. According to the introduction by Yu.A. Polkanov, written in January of 1942, the German officer, *Fürer* Karasek, a professor at the University of Vienna (?!) (as he said), had requested information about the Crimean Karaites. He stated that he had received a report from the head of the Labour Registry Office (for the deportation of the labour force to Germany) that the Karaites were ethnically Jews. The officer demanded relevant literature on the subject and wanted to know the opinion of the Russian scholar Polkanov, who was an expert on the history, culture and religion of the ethnic minorities of Crimea, including the Karaites. He asked Polkanov to write an article about the Crimean Karaites, which was to be completed by 17 March 1942 and would be sent to Berlin. He warned that if the article did not meet the deadline, the Karaites would be exterminated (Polkanov 1995: 4). Although Polkanov had previously simulated hand pain in order not to collaborate with the occupational newspaper (he had asked a Karaite doctor named V.O. Sinani to write him a certificate documenting his injury), he now agreed to write the review (Polkanov 1995: 4).

Shortly before the war, the Academy of Science ordered Polkanov to write an article about the Crimean Karaites for the compendium 'Peoples of the World'. He was able to further use the material he had previously collected. Additionally, he consulted with 'patriarchs' of the Karaite community: Sinani, Szapszał and E.I. Kalfa. They helped him expand on the material. Thus, Polkanov managed to complete a typescript (about 1 000 pages) before the deadline. The conclusions of the article apparently coincided with the information already possessed by German

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Aleksandr Ivanovich Polkanov (1884–1971) (a non-Karaite himself, but his wife was a Karaite) was a Crimean regional specialist, historian and ethnographer. Yu.A. Polkanov, a Karaite activist and writer, was A. Polkanov's son (see Chapter 4). See more in the appendix 'Biographies'.

scholars and satisfied the heads in Berlin. Several months later, articles about the Karaites by German authors appeared in a local newspaper. Later it became known that a special German anthropometric expedition had studied the Karaites and Tatars in Lithuania during the war, and the preliminary results were published in a scientific journal (?) in Germany in 1944 (Polkanov 1995: 5).

In his work *Krymskie karaimy* [The Crimean Karaites], Polkanov asserted that the Crimean and Polish-Lithuanian Karaites formed a common ethnic group. On the other hand, the Karaites of Egypt, Abyssinia, the Caucasus, Asia and other various places had nothing in common with them. The commonalities ended with the shared name. Modern Karaite authors writing at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century often refer to this thesis. In Polkanov's book, the Crimean Karaites are of Turkic origin. He referred to the anthropological research of the official statistical publications and to linguistic research. These recognised the Karaite language as very close, although not identical, to the language of the Codex Cumanicus. The author tasked themselves with supporting the conclusions of anthropologists and linguists on the Turkic origin of the Karaites by making reference to ethnology materials. Polkanov maintained that the Khazars, who confessed Judaism, had partly mixed with the Crimean Kipchaks and become the ancestors of the modern Karaites. Thus, the author excluded Semitic ancestors for the Karaites. He supported his conclusions on the Crimean Karaites being descendants of the Khazars by making reference to the statements by such well-known scholars as Grigoriev, Smirnov and Samoylovich (Polkanov 1995: 7–18, 70–75). Owing to the above-mentioned circumstances of the Holocaust, the imminent Polkanov advocated in his work the idea of continuous friendly contacts between the Karaites and the Crimean Tatars and other Turkic peoples, emphasising their close relationship. On the other hand, his occasional comparisons with Jews only emphasised the differences between the two peoples (see review of the book A.I. Polkanov *Krymskie*).

Polkanov was not the first, even among Karaite authors, (see, e.g. Szapszał in Chapter 4 of this study), to separate Eastern European and other Karaites from the Semitic ancestors of other Karaite groups, linking them instead to the Khazars and Kipchaks, but what he did do was make it into an official statement when writing to the German leaders. It would not have been wise for Polkanov to mention the Semitic background of the Karaites. However, current Crimean Karaite authors do not take this into account and reference Polkanov's statements quite often for proof of the Turkic background of the Karaites. They do not take into account (or they do not want to) the purpose of Polkanov's publication, which was to rescue the Karaites from the fate of the Jews during the Holocaust.

The article cost Polkanov his reputation: later he was accused by the KGB of 'collaborating with the occupiers'. He was accused of parricide and was sentenced to prison, but fortunately he was rehabilitated in 1956 (Bibikov 1981: 125–126).

Despite being saved from the Holocaust, the Karaites still experienced other bad luck. The deportation of the Crimean Tatars and of other peoples at the end of the War (in May of 1944) for alleged collaboration with the Nazi occupational regime interrupted further ethnological research in Crimea for a significant period of time. The Karaites were fortunate compared to others and mostly left alone. However, some families were wrongly deported along with the Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Bulgars and Greeks. About 150 Karaite persons were exiled from Crimea. This number, of course, is not large in absolute terms, but it was quite noticeable given the small number of Karaites (*Vodnochas'e* 19 June 2009).

Another misfortune occurred after the liberation of the peninsula from the fascist occupants. This was when ethnographic material, which had been preserved during the difficult years of the war, was destroyed (*Vodnochas'e* 19 June 2009). This included the entire department of the Simferopol Museum.

After the Second World War, short articles on the Karaites were published only in guidebooks and encyclopaedias, with much of the information based on the pre-war materials of the above-mentioned results by the Commission.

Such summary articles included entries in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*.

The first entry on the Karaites was published in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* – or *BSE*) before the war, in 1937 (Karaimy 1937: 435–437). The *Karaimy* (otherwise *karaity* or *karii* [the origin of the last name is not clear – D.M.]) were defined there as a Jewish sect, descendants of Anan from 8<sup>th</sup>-century Iraq. The historical origin of the Jewish sect was described at that time within the ideological context of class struggle. The anonymous author of the article argued that it was impossible to define precisely the time of the settlement of the Karaites in the Crimean Peninsula. However, he noted that a number of archaeological materials established that the Karaites had lived in Crimea since the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when the peninsula was under the control of the Khazars. The author mentioned the role of the Khazars in the Karaite ethnogenesis. He borrowed from the pre-revolutionary material of the above-mentioned Russian scholars: 'The Karaites and Khazars intermarried and became mixed. After the Tatars occupied the Crimean Peninsula, the Karaites were influenced by the Tatars'. The author also mentioned that after the annexation of Crimea by tsarist Russia, the Karaites started to separate themselves from the Jews in order to avoid being persecuted at the hands of the tsars. The author concluded that thus a fabulous doctrine had been created to argue that the Karaites were the ancient population of the peninsula, who had settled there in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., and therefore they did not participate in Christ's crucifixion. Thus, the author supported and strengthened a pre-revolutionary statement that the Karaites, who were a Jewish sect (important!), had then mixed with the Khazars (not a Khazar/Turkic people with no Jewish background). In other words, he argued for the mixed Jewish-

Turkic ethnic background of the Karaites. However, he remained sceptical of their ancient settlement in Crimea before the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

I agree with Roman Freund who wrote that the encyclopaedia of 1937 presented a picture of the Karaites according to the established political line. It aimed at 'dissociating the Karaites from the Jews, and the outspoken anti-Zionist approach dominating Marxist ideology – an impact of hypo-tactic political and ideological considerations' (Freund 1991: 23). However, Freund also emphasised that the interwar *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* edition of 1937 also acknowledged that the Karaites were, in fact, a Jewish sect, one which had not participated in the deicide ('A fantasy that the Karaite bourgeoisie exploited' (Freund 1991: 23) to gain certain privileges from the tsar, such as equating themselves with the Russians (Freund 1991: 23).

The anti-cosmopolitan campaign (1945–1953)<sup>140</sup> that dominated Russia in the post-war period, together with the anti-Semitic (end of the 1940s–1953) campaigns, could not help but influence the public representations of identity by the Karaites. The anti-cosmopolitan campaign was directed at the Soviet intelligentsia, who were accused of expressing pro-Western feelings and, allegedly, of a lack of patriotism. The source of the campaign arose from the propaganda surrounding Russian patriotism, which had started during the war in 1943. In this way, by the end of the war Soviet society was divided into patriots and cosmopolitans. Jews probably suffered the most from the anti-cosmopolitan campaign. The reason had to do with the establishment of the state of Israel and the failure to make it a Soviet satellite in the Middle East. Soviet Jews, and especially the Jewish intelligentsia, aroused suspicions among the Soviet administration by their enthusiasm for its establishment and by their supposedly pro-Western feelings in general, which were perceived as disloyalty towards the 'Soviet Motherland'. In the period of 1948–1953, a few thousand Jews were arrested on the charge of Zionist activity (or of 'Jewish bourgeois nationalism') (*Sovetskiy Soyuz* 1996: 236–256).

On the grounds of this political campaign, it is not surprising that the Karaites wanted to hide their cultural-religious Jewish background. In connection with this, the article about the Karaites in the second post-war edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1953 (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopedia* 1953: 110) represents a crucial turning point in the representation of Karaites. The article was shorter than the previous one and more important in that the Jewish background of Karaite history was omitted.

The article made the following statement:

The Karaites are descendants of the ancient Turkic tribes, which were a part of the Khazar Kaganate in the 8<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> century. (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopedia* 1953: 110) (my translation)

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140 The chronology of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign is disputable; however, many accept that it began with Stalin's toast to the health of the Russian people, who 'are the leading force of the Soviet Union', at a festive banquet on the occasion of the victory in World War II in Kremlin on the 24 May 1945; it ended with Stalin's death in 1953.

Then, it provided brief and ideologically safe information on their way of life and material culture in Crimea and Lithuania (since the 14<sup>th</sup> century). It concluded by noting that the ‘abundant folklore of the Karaites reflects their connections with the Khazars’ (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Encyclopedia* 1953: 110).

The article was anonymous, as were other entries in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*; however, now we know (according to an article titled ‘Karaimskie obshchiny. Karaimy Moskvyy’) that A.I Fuki, a Karaite, wrote the article. Two other articles in the 1953 edition of the BSE were also written by Karaites: ‘Karaite language’ by O.Ya. Prik and ‘Chufut-Kale’ by Szapszal.<sup>141</sup> A Russian Soviet scholar named Nikolay Baskakov also made a significant contribution to the articles.<sup>142</sup>

As Freund noted, in contrast to the interwar editions of the BSE, the post-WWII edition stated briefly that the Karaites constitute ‘a particular numerically insignificant ethnicity’ and thus avoids drawing any links with the Jews and Judaism. He noted that this statement was ‘the official standpoint imposed for decades on Soviet historiography’ (Freund 1991: 23).

The article in the 3rd edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* of 1973 (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* 1973: 379) assigned no value to the study and repeated instead information from the previous 1953 edition, but in a more condensed form.

Thus, the article in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1953 officially validated the Turkic origin of the Karaites. When thinking about the reasons that the Karaites tried to avoid any links with Jews, we should remember that the article was written by a Karaite in the period of the Soviet anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist ideological campaign (its chronology coincides with the Cold War 1947–1991).

At the same time, both Lithuanian (Encycl. Lit., 1973: 40) and Polish (Enc. Powsz., PWN, 1969: 463) encyclopaedias of that period refer to the Karaites as ‘West Turkic (Kipchak) people, who embraced reformed Judaism’ and ‘an ethnic group of Turkic origin’. The latter view was partly shared by the PAN Encyclopedia (Enc. Popul., PAN: 445), which claimed that ‘the Crimean Karaites are an ethnic group which, according to certain researchers, originates from the Khazars’ (Freund 1991: 23).

The modern author Vladimir Polyakov<sup>143</sup> argues that the Era of Stagnation in the USSR (1964–1985) was the most difficult period for the Karaites: a theory of the Jewish origin of the Karaites was propagated once again. It is hard to agree with Polyakov that a return to a theory on the Jewish background of the Eastern European Karaites was propaganda: it was rather a return to the historical past and it symbolised a thaw in Soviet policy; however, it could still harm their status and, hence, was viewed negatively. However, Polyakov pointed to another negative aspect of the

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141 On the authorship of the BSE articles in *Karaimskie obshchiny*, see Karaimy Moskvyy. In: *Virtual Karaim Museum* [Online].

142 Ibid.

143 See the appendix ‘Biographies’.

period. The material about them was removed from Crimean museums; many valuable objects and documents were destroyed. An effort was made to bar any mention of the Karaites (Polyakov 1998: 189).

Polyakov neatly observed that after-effects of a so-called 'quiet genocide' soon became apparent. The Karaite population decreased. Not only the children born to mixed marriages, but also those who had two Karaite parents, were officially registered as Russians. People tried to forget about their Karaite roots; they were ashamed of belonging to a 'non-titular' nation ('titular' meant Russian) (Polyakov 1998: 189).

However, before that particular period, starting from the end of the 1950s, scholars concentrated more on ideologically safe topics, such as the Karaite language. In that period, well-grounded linguistic works appeared on the Karaite language. The studies partly became the basis for the Turkic theories of contemporary Karaite writers. So, in 1964 the Institute of Language Studies of the Academia of Science of the USSR published in Moscow *A Grammar of the Karaite Language* by K.M. Musaev (1964).

Earlier, the academician Nikolay Baskakov had studied the Karaite language and noted that the phonetic structure, lexicons and grammar of the *Karaj* language preserved traces of 'the most ancient cases of the Turkic languages'. In his view, this linked the Karaite language with the Turkic languages of quite ancient peoples. He indicated that the alphabetic system of the Old Turkic language of Orkhon-Enisey points to the same phonetic structure, which still exists in the modern Karaite language. He also discovered ancient forms in the lexicons of the Karaites, especially in old Karaite translations of the Bible (*Sostoyanie i blizhayshie* 1957: 101–102).

In the foreword to the *Karaim-Russian-Polish Dictionary* (*Karaimsko-russko-polskiy slovar* 1974), which was edited by both Soviet and Polish authors, Baskakov, Szapszal and Zajaczkowski, in Moscow in 1974, the editors referred to the mixed Hun, Bulgaro-Khazarian, Uzo-Pecheneg, Kipchak origin of the Karaites. This statement underscored existing theories on the ethnic origin of the Karaites proposed by current Karaite authors (see Chapter 7 of this study).

On the basis of the Turkic Karaite language, the dictionary's authors came to the conclusion that the Karaites were of a Turkic ethnic origin:

Facts regarding the Karaite language indicate that the Karaites were a part of such tribal unions as the Huns, Bulgaro-Khazarian, Uzo-Pecheneg, in turn, and later of the Kipchak tribal union with the dominant Kipchak language, the main traces of which the Karaites preserved in their modern dialects. (*Karaimsko-russko-polskiy slovar* 1974: 6) (my translation)

At the same time, Zajaczkowski published his works in Poland (See Chapter 4 of this study).

The lack of a summary for works on the Karaites highlighted the need to re-publish a work by A.I. Polkanov, written during the World War II. Various scholars, including Turkologists such as B.Ya. Kokenay, I. Sulimovich (Warsaw) and Prof. V.I. Filonenko, approved the readiness of the

article for publication. However, censors in Crimea refused to permit publication of the article about the Karaites precisely because they were related by ethnicity, language and traditions to the deported Crimean Tatars. Besides, some Karaite families had been deported mistakenly too. A 'thaw' in the lack of publications about local deported peoples started in Crimea only at the end of the 1980s (*Karaimsko-russko-polskiy slovar* 1974: 5).

It is evident that during the Soviet period, the defining of Karaites as a Turkic people and of not having a Jewish background gained a foothold. This occurred for both political and security reasons. After the brief and more or less favourable period of Korenizatsia (when Karaite studies were favoured and an article was published in BSE in 1937), a dark chapter in Karaite history began at the end of the 1930s, when Karaites had to be cautious so as not to be accused of 'petty-bourgeois nationalism'. Neither could they openly practice Judaism because of anti-religious Soviet propaganda. During World War II, they had to hide their Jewish ethnic and cultural background in order to be spared the horrors of the Holocaust. After World War II had ended, other reasons hindered the development of Karaite identity: anti-Semitic and anti-cosmopolitan Soviet campaigning, which forced them 'to forget' completely their Jewish past (as we have seen in an article in BSE from 1953). In general, publications on the Karaites were scarce in the post-war Soviet period. This was also due to a fear of revealing a close cultural relationship between the Karaites and the deported Crimean Tatars. Hence, the Eastern European Karaites were nearly consigned to oblivion in Soviet society and forced to be afraid of admitting their Karaite origins. The result was assimilation with the 'Soviet nation': the destruction of their language, culture and religion, a terrifying scale of population decline from 8 500 in 1912 to 2 600 in 1989.



## Chapter 7. Post-Soviet Transformations of Karaite Identity at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

### Introduction

To trace how Karaite identity changed at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in comparison with the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I have studied the main Karaite periodicals of the period, such as the journal *Caraimica* (2007–present), the Karaite appendix ‘Qirim Karaila’ (*Къырым къарайлар*) (March 2005–present) of the Crimean Tatar newspaper *Qirim* (*Къырым*), the periodical *Awazymyz* (1989–present) and its appendix in the Russian language, ‘Golos Karaimov’ (*Голос караимов*), and the newspaper *Karaimskie Vesti* (*Караимские вести*) (1994–2003, 2007–present)<sup>144</sup> as well as a few articles by Post-Soviet Karaite authors.

I have chosen the above-mentioned periodicals and articles by contemporary Karaite authors as the main source for studies of current Karaite identity (which, though they represent an elite view, are not necessarily the opinion of the majority) because, as underlined by Hroch (2007; 1985) and others, intellectuals are ideologists and agitators during the initial stage of national movements. The Karaites are no exception: the Karaite intellectuals have been ideologists for the Karaite people and agitators for their new Turkic identity. Moreover, to maintain the same methodology adopted in the previous chapters, I have studied only published sources despite the fact that I could have interviewed Karaites. Thus, the picture of current Karaite identity is based on published materials, which do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Karaite majority. In other words, it is not necessarily a given that Karaite people have a similar view as their leaders. However, in this chapter I have revised a couple of surveys from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to compare them with articles by Karaite authors.

In the Soviet period, the communist regimes suppressed nationalism and imposed communist unity (Constitutional Rights 2002). After the communist regime collapsed between 1989 and 1991, a secret prohibition on studying the history of small peoples was repealed and a renaissance of religion and culture among small ethnic communities thrived at the same time that nationalism was revived among many of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Karaites have been experiencing a new period of national movement since then.<sup>145</sup> In the

<sup>144</sup> See the appendix ‘Periodicals’.

<sup>145</sup> To be more precise, we can consider the end of the 1980s as the beginning of the Karaite national movement, a time when the first Karaite organisations were registered in Lithuania, Crimea and Moscow (the first Karaite organisation was registered in Lithuania on 15.05.1988 — the cultural association of Lithuanian Karaites) (see Shchegoleva 2007: 10).

course of these historic changes, Karaites are building a new ‘ethnic’ identity in comparison with previous periods. Contemporary Karaites, as well as their earlier predecessors, are constructing their identity based on their language, views on their origin, religion and culture. They have been constructing their identity using the same ‘building blocks’ as in earlier periods, but the ‘structure’ of the ‘blocks’ has changed. However, not only a ‘structure’, but also the ordering of the components when constructing a post-Soviet Karaite identity has also changed.

Certainly, as noted in the previous chapters, these changes in current Karaite identity did not occur suddenly at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; rather, they developed gradually, starting in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and evolving until they took their current form in recent years.

### Post-Soviet Karai Self-Identification

Nowadays, Karaites of Eastern Europe call themselves a people or ethnic group (*narod* in Russian, *narodowość* in Polish), which is a result of the development in their identity: the notion of a ‘Karaite people/ethnicity’ appeared already at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, Chapter 5), was propagated in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see *Myśl Karaimska*, Chapter 5) and gained a foothold in the post-Soviet period. Thus, former *hazzan* and Chairman of the Board of the Religious Community of Lithuanian Karaites, Józef Firkowicz,<sup>146</sup> claimed on behalf of all Karaites of Lithuania that the Karaites of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine were Karaites not only from a *religious* point of view, but also from an *ethnic one* (Abkowitz 2008).

The Post-Soviet Karaite authors emphasised the Turkic aspects of Karaite identity, casting away everything Jewish, often avoiding Hebrew terminology and substituting it with Turkic terminology wherever they could.

For instance, one of the main ideologists for the post-Soviet Crimean Karaites, Yuriy Polkanov,<sup>147</sup> did not mention any Jewish background in his definition of the Karaite people, stating that they are a Turkic people. Thus, the editors of the brochure *Karai (Krymskie Karaimy 2000)*, among them Yuriy Polkanov, Alexander Babadjan,<sup>148</sup> T. Bogoslovskaya, G. Katyk, V. Kropotov,<sup>149</sup> Anna Polkanova,<sup>150</sup> Mikhail Kazas<sup>151</sup> and Mikhail Sarach<sup>152</sup> (all of them are Karaites), gave the following formulation regarding the self-identification of the Crimean Karaites:

146 A senior *hazzan* in Trakai kenassa and a chairman in Dziman (a Karaite religious community) in 2000—2009.

147 Yu.A. Polkanov (1935, Simferopol). He is a well-known Karaite ideologist, an author of many articles on Karaites, a head of the Center of Association of the Crimean Karaites. He is an active advocate for and a propagandist of a Turkic ethnocultural identity for the Karaites. See more in the appendix ‘Biographies’.

148 A.A. Babadjan (Simferopol), an engineer by education, is a Karaite *hazzan* and an author of publications on the Karaites.

149 V.S. Kropotov (Evpatoria) is a student of local lore (Evpatoria) and an author of publications on the Karaites.

150 Anna Yu. Polkanova is the daughter of Yuriy Polkanov, an honoured cultural worker of the ARC (Autonomous Republic of Crimea), a senior researcher at the Bakhchisaray Cultural-Historical Reserve and an author of numerous publications on the Karaites.

Crimean Karaites are an indigenous Crimean people (*narod*), united by common blood, language and traditions. They are aware of their ethnic uniqueness, a kinship with Turkic peoples, the originality of their culture and their religious independence. (Karai 2000: 6; Polkanov 1997: 22) (my translation)

This statement was accepted as an official one at the National Congress of the Crimean Karaites of Ukraine in 2003 (Levitskaya 1997: 140–141). We can find a similar definition for Karaite self-identification in other contemporary Crimean, Polish and Lithuanian Karaite sources (See, e.g. *Karaïmskaya Narodnaya Encyclopedia* 2000: 8–13, also 2000a: 6; Kobeckaite 1997; Lebedeva 2000; Szyszman 1989). For instance, we find the following definition of Karaite ethnic origins at the portal of Polish Karaites [karaimi.org](http://karaimi.org) in the section *About Us*:

Turkic Khazars participated in the ethnogenesis of the Crimean and Polish-Lithuanian Karaites and [then] did Kipchak-Polovets tribes of the Turkic origin, who came into that territory [later], after the decline of the Khazar Kaganate in the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (...). In 13-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, a relatively small amount of Karaites arrived from Crimea and settled in the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia, establishing communities (*dżymaty*) in Halicz (from 1246, according to certain sources), Darażnie, Ołyk, Kotów, Lwow, Łuck and others. Perhaps, the settlement was related to the appearance of Karaites in the territory of contemporary Hungarians already before Mongol invasion in 1241. In the end of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century, Lithuanian prince Vitold settled Karaites in Lithuania.<sup>153</sup> (The author is a Karaite named Szymon Pilecki<sup>154</sup>)

Note that no connection with the Jews or a Jewish background were mentioned in the above formulation.

Compare the above notions with Karaite self-identification in the previous century at the Religious Congress in Evpatoria in June of 1917:

The Karaites are a unique people, practising a Karaite religion. They are a people who lived in Crimea and among those who mixed with them a long time ago, before the annexation of Crimea to Russia, married them and nourished them spiritually – they are Karaites from Constantinople, Egypt, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Syria and Lithuania. (*Izvestiya Tavricheskogo* 1917; Babadjan 2004: 321) (my translation)

The above definition does not discuss whether the Crimean Karaites are Jews or not, but it refers to their ethnic merger with the ethnically Jewish Karaites from Turkey and the Middle East.

151 Mikhail Kazas is a former chairman of a cultural-educational society of Karaites in Moscow, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences and a co-author with R.A. Ayvaz of the *Narodnaya Karaïmskaya Encyclopedia* (2006).

152 Mikhail Sarach (1910, Moscow — 2000, France). He is a Karaite ideological leader and philanthropist. See more in the appendix 'Biographies'.

153 Original:

'Na etnogenezę Karaimów krymskich i polsko-litewskich złożyła się turecka część ludności państwa chazarskiego oraz – po jego upadku w drugiej połowie X w. (w wyniku przegranej w 969 r. bitwy z wojskami księcia kijowskiego Swiatosława) - przybyłe później na te tereny tureckie z pochodzenia szczepy kipczacko-połowieckie. Z Krymu w XIII-XIV w. stosunkowo niewielka liczba ludności karaïmskiej przesiedliła się na ziemię księstwa halicko-wołyńskiego, tworząc gminy wyznaniowe (dżymaty) w Haliczu (pewne źródła wskazują na rok 1246), Darażnie, Ołyce, Kotowie, Lwowie, Łucku i in. Być może, że osiedlenia te miały związek z pojawieniem się Karaimów na terenie obecnych Węgier jeszcze przed najazdem mongolskim w 1241 r. W końcu XIV w. w. ks. litewski Witold osiedlił Karaimów na Litwie' (Historia. In: Związek Karaimów Polskich)

154 Szymon Pilecki (1925, Troki) is Polish engineer and a public figure in Karaite society and has been chairman of the administrative board for the Karaite Religious Society (Karaj Diñ Birligiari LR) since 1971.

Two months later, the National Karaite Congress in Evpatoria (1917) produced almost the same idea:

The Karaites, an indigenous and unique people in Crimea united by a common religion, blood, language and customs from the earliest of times, maintain an inseparable religious connection with their Constantinople, Jerusalem and Egyptian co-religionists. (*Izvestiya Tavricheskogo* 1917) (my translation)

Although there is nothing about the ethnic origin of the Crimean Karaites, nor about their Jewishness in the definition of 1917, the Karaites emphasised the uniqueness of their ethnicity, different from a Jewish one, and the religious connection (not ethnic though) with their co-religionists from the Middle East, which was an important factor in Karaite self-identification. It is also important to note that the Karaites underlined that they are indigenous to Crimea.

Compare also the above definitions to an even earlier document, a petition from 1795 to the governor-general of Ekaterinoslav and Tavrida P. Zubov, about their origins:

Our Community, called Karaites, is *ancient Jewish*, settled in Crimea apparently about 450 years ago. (Belyi 1994: 31–32) (my italics, my translation)

Compare also the definition to a petition from 1825 to the Russian Emperor Alexander I, which I mentioned in Chapter 3 of this study:

We all Karaites are descendants of one *ancient Jewish tribe*, which more than four hundred centuries ago settled in Crimea, and with other Crimean peoples became subjects of the blessed state of Your Imperial Highness. (For the text of the petition, see in Belyi 1994: 32–33) (my italics, my translation)

The two petitions were discussed in Chapter 3 of the study.

Thus, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and at the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Karaites considered themselves Jews and descendants of an ancient Jewish tribe, but at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century they had re-imagined themselves as descendants of Turkic peoples.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, religion and language were the main determinants of Karaite identity (see Chapter 4). Today this is not the case. Nowadays, most Karaites neither speak the Karaite language nor practise the Karaite religion. Then, what makes them Karaites? According to the examined sources (see below), what make them Karaites are the emotional feeling of belonging to a common fraternity, belief in a common origin (namely a Turkic origin), Turkic culture and at least one Karaite parent, because mixed marriages are very common nowadays.

As to the question of what it means to be a Karaite today, a Polish scholar (not a Karaite) named Henrik Jankowski proposes the following answer:

A Karaite is anybody who has Karaites among his or her ancestors, who wants to be a Karaite and whom other Karaites take to be one [of them]. In other words, the definition of the modern Karaite ethnicity is a mutual identification of an individual and the community. This mutual identification is also important because of the disappearance of other distinctive features of the culture of Karaites in the time of globalisation, such as customs, traditional meals and literary tradition. (Jankowski 2004: 90)

A Lithuanian Karaite scholar named Halina Kobeckaite,<sup>155</sup> writing about all Eastern European Karaites, argued that

The Karaites' national identity has essentially been determined by national self-consciousness, the perception of an historic past, a language related to ethnic Turkic languages, religion and the spiritual and material-cultural heritage of the people (Kobeckaite 1997: 37).

A Crimean Karaite living in Moscow and the chief editor of the newspaper *Karaimskie Vesti*, Oleg Petrov-Dubinskiy<sup>156</sup> wrote that although he was raised by his Russian father after his Karaite mother had been arrested according to Article 58 (RSFSR Penal Code for counter-revolutionary activity), he feels himself to be a Karaite. He believes that he and other Karaites have a high level of self-identification. In my opinion, Karaite self-identification was an important feature in their survival throughout the centuries. As Ernest Gellner wrote about nations (which is true for an ethnic group as well):

Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognise each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, *nations maketh man*; nations are artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. (Gellner 1996: 7)

Petrov-Dubinskiy believes that Karaite identity is determined by the special character of the Karaites. He deems that the special conditions of life as Crimean Karaites helped shape their multicultural and tolerant character as well as their bravery, accountability, responsibility and devotion to one another. In his opinion, this is why the Lithuanian Prince Vytautas 'the Great' chose them to guard Trakai Castle.<sup>157</sup> Petrov-Dubinskiy also believes that the Karaites could always survive any hardships due to their strong work ethic and ability to adapt to very difficult conditions. He regards the Karaite religion, a respect for older people and a love of children as other factors shaping the character of the Karaites. Petrov-Dubinskiy also asserted that due to their diligence and savvy business activities, Karaites had been one of the most well-to-do peoples in the Russian Empire before the revolution of 1917. The Karaites always supported each other; that is why all young people could afford to study and why there were so many well-known scholars, actors, artists and musicians among them (*Karaimskie Vesti* 3, 2008). Petrov-Dubinskiy is of mixed Russian-Karaite origin. This fact to some extent may influence his perception of Karaite identity. We should consider that the most current Karaites are of mixed ethnic origin.

Numerous materials show that the Karaites are proud of their identity. For instance, a newspaper of the Crimean Karaites living in Moscow, *Karaimskie Vesti*, has published many biographical articles (almost in every issue) on ordinary, but worthy Karaite people and on prominent ones too. One article speaks of a certain elderly Karaite named Alfred Yulianovich

155 Dr. Halina (Galina) Kobeckaite (1939, Trakai) is a Doctor of Philosophy, journalist and translator, has been an ambassador to Estonia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Finland, and is an activist within the Karaite community.

156 O.V. Petrov-Dubinskiy (Moscow) is member of the Crimean Karaite community in Moscow, chief editor of the newspaper *Karaimskie Vesti*. He is an engineer and entrepreneur took classes on journalism. He is the author of numerous publications in *Karaimskie Vesti*. In his own words, he is the offspring of the Szapszał family from Chufut-Kale and the Dubinski family from Trakai.

157 This is a Karaite ethnic saga about their arrival with Prince Vytautas in Lithuania at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. See details in Chapter 5.

Zharnovskiy, who possesses all the most pronounced traits of Karaite character: vital energy, kindness and tactfulness (*Karaimskie Vesti* 4 (91) 2009: 8).

Based on those biographical articles, articles by Petrov-Dubinskiy in *Karaimskie Vesti* (3. July-August 2008: 4-6; 4 (91). September-October 2009: 8) and a poem by T.I. Ormeli<sup>158</sup> in *Karaimskie Vesti* (1 (88). January-March 2009), we can pick out the following determinants of contemporary Karaite self-identification.

Positive image: Karaites are one of the smallest peoples in number, but they are brave, diligent, hospitable and friendly. Karaites are proud of themselves. They are honest and have never been involved in crime (this is a component of their identity, a ‘national saga’ — see Chapter 5 of this study).

‘National’ heroes: Karaites are talented. There are many well-known and respected people among them, such as the esteemed Russian artist Aleksandr Maykapar, the painter Azariy Kodjak, the mayor of Evpatoria, Semen Duvan, the last *hakham* of the Karaites, orientalist and adviser to the Persian shah, Mohammed-Ali Seraya Szapszał, the well-known Soviet film producer Sergey Yutkevich and great ballerina Anna Pavlova.<sup>159</sup> (Note that all are recent heroes in the list in comparison with previous periods. Abraham Firkovich’s name is not on the list. The reason may be that Firkovich has too Jewish of an image, one not suitable for the current Karaite identity.)

Common rights and duties: they help each other; mutual assistance is very common in their communities.

Religion: they respect their religion and old people, and they love children.

Sacred places: the principal Karaite sacred places are *Chufut-Kale* and the graveyard *Balta Timeyiz* (the Statute of Religious Communities of the Crimean Karaites registered Chufut Kale and Balta Timeyiz as national sacred places and places of pilgrimage) (El 2001: 18–19). The idea of having sacred places is a new determinant of their identity.

Ethnic origin: they are a very ancient people. They are indigenous to Crimea; the Karaites are descendants of the Khazars and other Turkic peoples.

Culture: Karaite songs and dances (e.g. the *Haytarma* dance) and Karaite cuisine are seen as bright attributes of Karaite identity. These are new determinants of Karaite identity, although Szapszał emphasised the importance of folklore.

Turkification: in the last few decades, the Karaites have drawn a number of Turkic symbols on their sacred places, on their kenassas: in Vilnius, in Chufut-Kale, and on grave monuments. For example, in October 2009, in Melitopol, Karaites erected a monument with the names of Karaites who were buried in the graveyard, but whose graves had not survived. The monument has Turkic

158 T.I. Ormeli (1916–2014, Simferopol) is an elder member of the Association of Crimean Karaites, *QirimKarailar*. He is the author of a book *Vse Luchshee Dlya Gostya Dorogogo – Vospominanie, Folklor, Natsionalnaya Kukhnya Krymskikh Karaimov v Stikhakh I Retseptakh* [All the Best for A Dear Guest – Memories, Folklore, National Cuisine of the Crimean Karaites in Poems and Recipes] (2008).

159 The Karaite origin of the last one is doubtful. There are some references that her biological father was either a Jew or a Karaite. But both versions are unconfirmed.

symbols and a traditional Karaite coat-of-arms (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (92), November-December 2009).<sup>160</sup> (Turkic symbols are a new feature of Karaite identity, one that emphasises the Turkic background of Karaites.) These traits reflect a highly romantic view of the Karaites about their essential Karait-ness, typical for periods of the national romanticism of peoples.

In order to compare the romantic attributes that appear in the material analysed above with general public opinion, it is important to look at two recent surveys concerning Karaite identity in Lithuania and Poland (*Karaimai Lietuvoje* 1997) (Adamczuk 2005: 40). An important aim of the surveys (published in 1997 and 2003) was to determine the state of awareness and feeling of ethnic and religious identity among Karaites as well as the extent to which their religion, culture, traditions and language (Adamczuk 2005: 36) have been preserved. Two hundred seventy-five people were interviewed in Lithuania in 2001, and 126 in Poland in 2002: 401 people in total. It is interesting that in Lithuania, almost everybody, 273 people (out of 275), stated their ethnicity as Karaite, but only 45 (out of 126) did so in Poland (Adamczuk 2005: 38–39). As for religion, 87.2% from the sample acknowledged themselves as believers, 63.8% of whom recognised the Karaite religion as their own (69.5% in Lithuania and 51.6% in Poland). Others declared themselves to be Catholic (Adamczuk 2005: 43). This means that Lithuanian Karaites have a stronger Karaite identity than their Polish brethren. Another conclusion is that religion is still an important attribute of identity. Those conducting the surveys concluded that the results revealed that a formal declaration of ethnicity and religion is not for everybody when it comes to identifying with a particular group. A number of respondents to the surveys did not declare their belonging to the Karaite ethnic or religious group, but they were related to those who declared such a belonging. Thus, the survey also checked genetic (or biological) belonging to the Karaite group, not only self-identification (Adamczuk 2005: 39).

The surveys revealed that one factor delineating Karaitism (in an ethnic sense) is the sense of an emotional connection with the widely understood Karaite culture. Among all the participants in the surveys, 86% felt such a connection. This emotional connection was stronger in Lithuania (92.4%) than in Poland (72.2%), but it was high in both countries and referred to the possibility of restoring essential components of Karaite identity, which, according to the authors of the survey, include language, literature, tradition, religion, principles and rituals (Adamczuk 2005: 40; see also 2004). Language and culture were also defined by the surveys as key issues in shaping ethnic and cultural identities. The surveys showed that 28 respondents possessed written and oral skills in the Karaite language (10.2%) in Lithuania and 11 respondents in Poland (8.7%). Sixty-nine respondents (25.1%) in Lithuania possessed only oral skills, while 17 respondents (13.5%) in Poland did. Finally, 66.5% of respondents in Lithuania and 49.4% in Poland defined the Karaite language as their native (Adamczuk 2005: 45–46).

160 A link to the article with a picture of the stella is available at: <http://goo.gl/JGNOcT> (accessed: 16.04.2014).

Earlier, in 1997, a similar ethnology-statistical survey was conducted by the Department of Statistics to obtain exhaustive information on the state of Karaites' social, cultural, ethnic and religious relations in Lithuania. It revealed that not all descendants of mixed families consider themselves to be Karaite. The survey revealed that in order to define 'an individual's nationality' (it is a bad translation into English; it should be an 'individual's ethnicity' instead), it is not enough to know his/her religion or native language. Ethnicity was a matter of individual self-determination. Two hundred seven of the 257 interviewed Karaites had been born into 'ethnically pure' Karaite families, i.e. 92% of the respondents indicated that they were Karaites by ethnicity (for more on the methodology and the scope of the survey, see *Karaims in Lithuania* 1997: 46, 50). In the 1997 survey, language was also considered as the central element of ethnic self-consciousness and culture. The survey used data from the 1989 population census, according to which 72.7% of Karaites considered the Karaite language as their native language. But at the time of the 1997 survey, 82% of Karaites indicated the Karaite language was their native language, although only 13% could speak and write it, 31% could only speak it and approximately every fourth Karaite adult could neither speak nor write it (*Karaims in Lithuania* 1997: 55). In most cases, the Karaite language was passed down from generation to generation in families. Sixty-five per cent of the respondents had mastered or learned the Karaite language at home, while 10% had had the opportunity to attend Sunday schools at a *kenassa* and only a small number had learned Karaite from their relatives and not at home (*Karaims in Lithuania* 1997: 55). As for religion, when answering the question 'What faith do you practise?', 86% of Karaites indicated the Karaite religion, 13% were non-believers and about 1% practiced other faiths. Almost all of the respondents practicing the Karaite faith reportedly observed the customs and religious norms and took part in the annual feasts, while every ninth believer reported praying daily. Non-religious Karaites attended *kenassa* only on important holidays (*Karaims in Lithuania* 1997: 54–55). If we compare the list of identity attributes in provided in *Karaimskie Vesti* with the surveys of 1997 and 2003, the most important attribute of the Post-Soviet Karaite identity is the emotional connection with a particular group and self-identification. At the same time, religion is still important, especially in Lithuania. Karaite identity is stronger in Lithuania in comparison to Poland.

### **Current Views on the Ethnic Origin of the Karaites**

Karaite views on their ethnic origin have changed a great deal since A. Firkovich's times in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Karaite scholar argued only for an ancient origin of the Karaites in the territory of Crimea in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and for a good relationship between the Karaites and Khazars. However, he thought of the Karaites only in terms of having a Semitic origin. A Russian Turkologist named Grigor'ev was the first to propose a Khazar origin for the Karaites in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup>



century (see Chapter 3). In the Polish-Lithuanian period, some Karaite and non-Karaite scholars argued for a Turkic origin for the Karaites and added the Cumans along with the Khazars to the list of Karaite ancestors. In Post-Soviet Karaite literature, the notion of a purely Turkic/Khazar origin gained a very strong position. Current Karaite ideologists accepted and further developed the hypothesis about the Khazar origin of the Karaites first proposed by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Turkologists: Vasiliy Grigoriev, Vasiliy Smirnov, Aleksandr Samoylovich and others. They also referred to authors from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Veniamin Alekseev, the linguist Nikolay Baskakov, Professor Corrado Gini and others (see previous chapters of the study). Nowadays, Crimean Karaite authors argue that not only were the Khazars ancestors of the Karaites, but different Khazar and Hun tribal units may have participated in their genesis as well (Bogachevskaya 2003: 287). This thesis is different from the conceptions of scholars in previous periods. A Crimean Karaite author named Yu. Polkanov wrote the following:

Crimean Karaite-Turks (*Karai*) are descendants of a branch of ancient Karaites who were a part of the Hun and Khazar united tribes, who later assimilated the Crimean Sarmato-Alans and partly the Goths. (*Karai* 1997: 22) (my translation)

Note that in comparison with the previous periods analysed in previous chapters of this work, Polkanov added the Huns and Sarmato-Alans to the Khazars as ancestors. Polkanov and other current Karaite authors only refer to earlier research, mainly from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We may suppose that the current Karaite ideologist added more Turkic peoples to the list of Karaite ancestors to put weight on the concept of the Turkic origin of the Karaites and to the Turkic identity of the Karaites. Probably, ethnogenesis theories regarding the Crimean Tatars, who have incorporated a long list of Crimean tribes into their ancestry, including the Scythians, Sarmats, Huns, Goths and others, have also influenced Karaite concepts.

In addition to the Turkic ancestors, contemporary Karaite authors have also added Aryan forefathers (Bogachevskaya 2003: 288) and traced mongoloid traits in their faces. They have included other ancestors as well, such as the Kyrks, Uzuns, Naymans, Kara and Sars, and later the Cumans and other Turkic tribes. They have also suggested that the Karaites had common ethnic roots with the Crimean Tatars, Kyrgyzs, Karachai-Balkars, Cumyks, Kazakhs and Bashkirs (*Karai* 1997: 10; see also details on the ‘ethnogenesis’ of the Karaites in the *Karaimskaya Narodnaya Encyclopedia* 1998). However, as I already mentioned, I have not found a reference to any scientific sources for this list of ancestors. Polish and Lithuanian Karaite authors (for a definition of the Karaite ‘ethnogenesis’ by the Polish Karaite author Szymon Pilecki, see above) shared similar ideas, but had a much shorter list of ancestors. For instance, the Lithuanian Karaite H. Kobeckaite wrote:

When the centre of Karaism moved from Baghdad to Jerusalem, this faith started expanding in many countries. Part of the Turkic peoples (Khazar, later Polovtsian or Kipchak-Kuman) in Crimea and the steppes of the Lower Volga converted to Karaimism in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, which eventually were united into one nation by the religion. The Karaims residing currently in

Lithuania, Poland, the Ukraine, Crimea and Russia are their descendants. (Kobeckaite 1997: 39)

Polish-Lithuanian Karaite authors are less bold and more grounded in their statements than their Crimean brethren. They have not modified the list of Karaite ancestors since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (remember the Polovtsian or Kipchak-Cuman ancestors of the Karaites – a list proposed by Zajaczkowski, Szapszal and few non-Karaite Polish authors of the same period; see Chapter 5).

In another publication, Kobeckaite (2008: 265) wrote that the Karaite language was formed around the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries based on the languages of the Turkic peoples (Khazars, Kypchaks-Cumans or Polovtsians) who lived in the Khazar Kaganate and had converted to the Karaite religion. These reasons (language and religion), in her view, consolidated the tribes into one people and turned the name of a religion into the name of a people (ethnic group). She highlighted the fact that ethnic Turks-Karaites were namely the descendants of those peoples who had lived in the Black Sea region (Crimea) of the Khazar Khaganate. Referring to Zajaczkowski (1961; 1961: 1–3), she emphasised that the Khazar origin of the Karaites played a very important role in Karaite self-identification (Kobeckaite 2008: 265; also Kobeckaite & Pilecki 2005: 17).

The Evpatorian Karaite hazzan Viktor (David) Tiriyaki<sup>161</sup> is a follower of a traditional model of Karaism. Even still, he wrote that the Eastern European Karaites were descendants of the Khazar Kaganate tribes and of a local population in Crimea. He referred to V. Alekseev (1970) (Alekseev 2008), who had allegedly verified their Turkic genetic origins. Tiriyaki mentioned the Uzun, Komen, Kalmuk, Khalach, Bory, Kara and others tribes who participated in the Karaite ‘ethnogenesis’ after the collapse of the Khazar Khaganate. He wrote that the mentioned ethnonyms of the tribes were reflected in the Karaite last names (Tiriyaki 2008: 5). As to other followers of Karaism, Tiriyaki considered them to be ethnic Arabs (Tiriyaki 2008: 6).

As to the contemporary description of the outward appearance of the Karaites, L. Graczyk, for instance, argued for Mongol-Turkic traits in the Karaite faces:

[They have] black hair, typical prominent noses and very dark eyes; their anthropophysical type, different from ‘Polish’, immediately draws attention. They have traits of Asian influence: an almond shape [to their] eyes, medium height. This difference of Polish Karaites originates from Mongol and Turkic influence. (Graczyk 2012: 211)

Thus, most Crimean Karaite authors consider the Karaites to be descendants of quite a few Turkic and other tribes that had originally populated the Crimean Peninsula, while Polish and Lithuanian authors include the Khazars and Cumans in the list of Karaite ancestors.

### **Culture, Way of Life, Traditions and Rituals, Language and Other Attributes of**

161 Viktor (David) Tiriyaki (1955, Evpatoria) is chairman of the Religious Administration of Religious Organisations of Karaites of Ukraine, a leader and hazzan of the religious community of Karaites in Evpatoria and the author of numerous publications on the Karaites.

## Current Karaite Identity

The Karaites are the ‘successors of Khazar culture and Turkic traditions’ states the brochure *Karai* (Krymskie Karaimy 1997: 11):

They used to be cattle-breeders, gardeners, warriors and handicraftsmen, which is confirmed by their surnames: Bairaktar – flag-bearer; Sarach – saddle-maker; Koichu – shepherd; Tabbakh – leather maker; etc. ... Their way of life has a lot in common with the Crimean Tatars. (my translation)

Present-day Karaites state that their customs and Karaite national dishes are reminders of the Khazar period in Karaite history (1997: 11). Contemporary Karaites consider themselves to be a part of the Turkic culture. Thus, they participate in Turkic cultural events and travel to Turkey. For instance, some Karaites from Eastern Europe recently participated in a festival of Turkic peoples in Istanbul. The idea of the festival was to unite Turkic peoples living very far away from each other (*Karaimskie Vesti* 3 (84), 2008). The purpose of many events organised by the Karaites is to unite young Karaite people and to introduce them to Karaite traditions (*Karaimskie Vesti* 1 (88), 2009). This is because Karaites realise that Karaite culture and community life will be kept alive only if the Karaite youth are involved inherit the traditions (*Karaimskie Vesti* 4, 2012: 7). Cuisine plays an important role in Karaite representations of their culture. Especially Karaite pasties (in Russian: *Karaimskie pirozhki*; in Lithuanian: *kibinai/kybyn* or *kibinlar*) (*Karaimskie Vesti* 2008: 2) are the main symbol of their ethnic cuisine.<sup>162</sup> Kibinai are present at all Karaite events and the Karaites serve them as a treat for guests. Emilia I. Lebedeva (Sariban)<sup>163</sup> has written that the Russian emperors had admired Karaite cuisine (*Karaimskie Vesti* 1(63), 2010: 8). I am familiar with one Karaite lady, currently living in Helsinki, who does not identify herself with Karaite culture because she lost connections with the Karaite community at a young age when she moved with her parents from Crimea to St. Petersburg. Although she does not remember any Karaite traditions from her grandparents or anything that made them different from others, she remembers her grandmother’s Karaites pasties, and she repeatedly mentioned them during our conversation about her Karaite roots.

*Traditions and rituals* also play an important role in the preservation (and construction) of the ethnic<sup>164</sup> identity of the Karaites. Kobeckaite wrote that:

162 Abraham Firkovich attempted to prohibit this very popular, but non-kosher, food from being eaten by Crimean and even Istanbul Karaites. This food is called in Crimea *küveti*, ‘*köbeti u-bhi-lešon Rûmî* (i.e. Greek) *milina*’. It is interesting that, ‘in the 20<sup>th</sup> century this delicacy, called now *karaimskie pirozhki* in Russian, became one of the outstanding constituents of the popular level of the Qaraim national identity, comparable to *gefilte fish* with Ashkenazic Jews or to *kebab* and *ayran* with Turks. No doubt this food, that came to Crimea from Istanbul and was – in the past – unknown amongst the Qaraites of Lithuania and Wolhynia, was greatly loved by the Qaraites of Istanbul when Firkowicz was there, and the attempt to prohibit it did not endear him to the members of the community whom he had threatened with the ban’. (Shapira 2003: 48, 49).

163 Emilia I. Lebedeva (Crimea) is a Karaite historian and an author of books and articles on Karaites. See more in the appendix ‘Biographies’.

164 Kobeckaite uses this term, meaning ethnic group.

One of the most important conditions for the preservation of identity of Karaims is the adherence to national customs and rituals in relation to the essential events in a personal life, such as birth, marriage and death, as well as the nature cycle or calendar feasts, such as the new moon, harvest and sacrifice. (Kobeckaite 1997: 44)

Like other contemporary Karaite authors, Kobeckaite referred to the Turkic traditions of the Karaites. She wrote that their customs, which were of a distinctively Turkic origin, were the most important part of the Karaite religious feasts. She also mentioned that the Karaite wedding customs strongly resembled wedding customs of the Karachais and other ethnic Turkic groups in the Caucasus and Crimea: 'The favourite Karaim lullaby *Bir Bar Edi* has its counterpart in Karachai folklore. And it is not by chance that Karaims call Karachais *their brothers in language*.' (Kobeckaite 1997: 44).

Even though nowadays most Karaites do not speak the Karaite language (on the Karaite language, see Németh 2012: 53–73), they still consider it one of the central elements of their self-identification. According to Lucjan Adamczuk,<sup>165</sup> a key source for the existence of a symbolic culture of any ethnic group is their own language, through which culture is created and transmitted (Adamczuk 2005: 45). As the above-mentioned statistical survey conducted by the Department of Statistics (1997) shows, language was still the central element in the ethnocultural self-identification of Karaites.<sup>166</sup> Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, certain Karaite scholars (e.g. A. Zajczkowski) had used the Karaite language as a tool of de-Judification and to trace the Karaites' alleged descent from the Khazars (Freund 1991: 11) (see Chapter 5 of this study). When writing of the Karaite language, Kobeckaite, for instance, emphasised the fact that among the ancient Turkic languages, the Karaite language was the closest to the extinct language of the Cumans (or Polovets), one of the peoples of the Khazar Khaganate (Kobeckaite 1997: 37; Kobeckaite & Pilecki 2005: 17). Since the 1930s, Karaites authors had been emphasising the links between the Karaite and Cuman languages because the Cumans are popular candidates for the Karaites' ancestors in articles on the Karaite 'ethnogenesis'.<sup>167</sup> However, R. Freund has noted that the Karaites had for a long time strongly emphasised the affinity between the Karaite and other Turkic languages, such as the old Armeno-Kipchak and Cuman-Polovets languages. They have also exaggerated the presence of Arabic and Persian loan words in their language, while downplaying and ignoring the obvious influence of the Biblical Hebrew. He pinpointed the fact that the Karaite Hebrew heritage became a victim of de-Judification, which turned into a clash with the current Karaite Turkic ethnic identity (Freund 1991: 15).

<sup>165</sup> Lucjan Adamczuk is a Polish sociologist. See more in the appendix 'Periodicals'.

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'According to the data of the 1989 population census, 72.7% of Karaims considered the Karaim language as their native language. At the time of the survey (1997) 82% indicated Karaim, although only 13% could speak and write their native language'. (Methodology and the scope of the survey in *Karaims in Lithuania* 1997: 55).

<sup>167</sup> See Chapter 3 of this study.

Only a few aged speakers of the Karaite language remain in Eastern Europe today, particularly in Lithuania. However, in the last few years there have been more efforts to maintain a basic knowledge of the Karaite language in Poland and Lithuania. In October 2008, a Karaite school (*midrash*) opened in Troki (Németh 2012: 69). Recently, a non-Karaite linguist named Eva Csato<sup>168</sup> organised ten summer schools for the Karaite language at Uppsala University, and Karaites of all ages participated with great enthusiasm (*Karaimskie Vesti* 3 (105) 2012: 4–7). Additionally, there are also courses on the Karaite language for young Karaite school pupils held in Evpatoria (*Karaimskie Vesti* 4 (106) 2012: 7). Moreover, in the last 15 years a textbook in the Karaite language (Firkovičius 1996), two Polish-Karaite dictionaries (Lavrinovich 2007; Juchniewicz 2008; Józefowicz 2008) (on the basis of the Karaite-Russian-Polish dictionary of 1974) and Crimean Karaite dictionaries (Hafuz 1995; Levi 1996) have been published (Németh 2012: 70). A great number of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Karaite publications have been digitalised and distributed on the Internet (e.g. [www.karaimi.org](http://www.karaimi.org)), which has expanded the availability of Karaite materials and increased the popularity of the language, history and culture of the Karaites (Németh 2012: 70).

### *Infidelity Traditions*

A Karaite, Valentin Kefeli,<sup>169</sup> wrote that Karaites had a period of paganism in their history lasting from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. He noted that they practiced a pagan religion of the Turks during that period, which included horse, cave and sky worship and the worship of totemic items, such as oaks and stones. In his opinion, the Karaites spoke a language related to that of the Cumans and Oghuz Turks back then, and hence, they entered the Khazar Khaganate already speaking a Turkic language (*Karaimskaya Narodnaya Encyklopedia* 1995; Kefeli 2007: 4).<sup>170</sup> Referring to S. Saitova (1995), he concluded that the Karaite religion had merged with the paganism of the ancient Turks (Kefeli 2007: 4). When addressing the Turkic anthropological type of the Karaites, Kefeli referred to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century anthropologists Samuel Weissenberg and Julian Talko-Hryniewicz (Kefeli 2007: 6). Besides Kefeli, a French Karaite of Crimean origin, Simon Szyszman (1909–1993)<sup>171</sup> also mentioned a successful Karaite missionary in Khazaria (Szyszman 1957: 174–211).

In comparison with the previous periods, contemporary Karaite intellectuals have acknowledged a period of Karaite paganism, which later merged with Karaism. Although Szapszał

168 Eva Csato is a professor in Turkic languages.

169 V.I. Kefeli (1937, Moscow) is a professor and director of the Institute of Soil Science and Photosynthesis of the Russian Academy of Science. In 1989, he established a Karaite museum in Pushchino (Moscow region). In 1994–1996, he was the head of *Karaimskie Vesti*. Since 1996, he has lived in the US, where he established the International Institute of Crimean Karaites in 2003.

170 Note that the Karaite religion, which is more conservative than Orthodox Judaism with its strict Halakha, absolutely excluded pagan worship (Kizilov 2011a: 100).

Some current religious leaders have also written about this (see Tiriyaqi 2005; Babadjian 2007).

171 Simon Szyszman (1909, Simferopol – 1993, Paris) was a Karaite historian and public figure. He has devoted most of the life to researching the Karaites and their religious history. Since 1973, he has edited a magazine called *Bulletin d'etudes Karaites*. He wrote an important book, *Le Karaïsme. Ses doctrines et son histoire, Les Karaites d'Europe* (1980), and a large number of articles concerning the Karaites. See more on him in the appendix 'Biographies'.

and Zajaczkowski were the first to mention the oak worship of the Karaites, they did not refer to other heathen traditions, such as horse worship, sky worship and other types of worship. Post-Soviet Karaite authors developed more far-reaching statements on the Khazar-Karaite relations than A. Firkovich's references to the friendship of the Karaites with the Khazars.<sup>172</sup>

### De-Judification

Some scholars argued that the main tendency of the Post-Soviet *Karai* (as Crimean Karaites call themselves nowadays) literature is the Turkification and purging of any traces of Semitism and Judaism (see already mentioned works by Shchegoleva 2007; Bogachevskaya 2003). Post-Soviet *Karai* authors consider any attempts to point to or to research the Judaic heritage in Karaite culture as insulting and/or demonstrating abysmal ignorance, or, at the very least, as a vestige of the Middle Ages, of imperial times or of the Soviet past (Bogachevskaya 2003: 289). This tendency is evident in the articles published in a special issue of *Qirim Karailar* 3 (38) (2008). The articles were dedicated to the so-called 'unmasking of anti-Karaite company by Jewish authors who allegedly distorted the origin, history and religion of the Crimean Karaites (Karai)' (Petrov-Dubinskiy 2008). By saying 'anti-Karaite company' and accusing Jewish scholars of distorting the facts of Karaite history, the Karaite authors were referring to historical studies on the Semitic background of Karaites done mainly by Israeli scholars. The first page of the March issue of *Qirim Karailar* focused on a resolution drafted in a conference entitled 'On the Disregard of Self-Identification and Disinformation Regarding the Crimean Karaites', which was held by a Ukrainian association of Crimean Karaites called *Kirimkarailar* in 1999. Another example is an editors' review called 'New Demonstration of Disregard and Disinformation about the Crimean Karaites', which was part of a brochure called *Ukraine Jews: Inextinguishable Candle of Tavrida* by K. Erlikh (2008)".<sup>173</sup> In the opinion of the editorial board of *Qirim Karailar*, Erlikh had distorted the true history of the Karaites by writing about them in the context of Jewish history. In the same issue of *Qirim Karailar*, a review of a book called *Ancient Crimea: History and Study of Local Lore* by A. Potienko (2007) was placed under the heading 'Be Careful! Ignorance!' The reviewer accused the author of ignorance regarding questions of religion and the origin of the Karaites – again, because the author wrote about Karaite history and religion through the prism of Jewish studies. The Karaites Petrov-Dubinskiy, Polkanova and Babadjan criticised the scholars A. Gertzen, Yu. Mogarychev, M. Kizilov, G. Ahiezer and D. Shapira (Babadjan March 19, 2008) for telling 'shameless lies and the

172 However, the hypothesis about the conversion of Khazaria to Karaite Judaism could not be supported until now because there is no evidence in any known source that the Khazars converted to Karaism or that the Karaites lived in the Khazar Khaganate. In contrast, medieval Karaite scholars wrote with disregard about the Khazars. As I have mentioned in Chapter 3, some medieval Karaite scholars called the Khazars *mamzerim* (Hebrew: 'bastards'); see Ankori 1959: 71–74.

173 See a review of the book (in Russian) by Kizilov 2011b

distortion of facts' in their research on Karaite history by writing about the Karaites' Jewish background. Petrov-Dubinskiy tried to argue against what he thought was a distortion of facts about the Karaites in his article 'Against the Publication of Anti-Karaite Materials in *Caraimica*' (January-March 2008a). In it, he criticised an article by Golda Ahiezer republished in *Lehaim* (2007). Petrov-Dubinskiy argued that a relationship between the Karaites and Jews had religious, political and even economic reasons (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (97), 2010; see also Polkanova 2008). He explained that some Eastern European Karaites had immigrated to Israel due solely to economic difficulties in the post-Soviet countries, which some Jewish scholars had then criticised in relation to the Turkic identity claimed by Eastern European Karaites (*Karaimskie Vesti* 2(89), 2009: 6–9). The other example is the 'Open Letter to Producers of the Movie 'Karaites' on Behalf of All Offended Karaites' (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (97), 2010), where Petrov-Dubinskiy refuted the claim 'Karaites are the most enigmatic of people'. He argued that

Since a long time ago, there has been no enigma regarding the origin 'of the ancient Turkic people', the Karaites, because Turkologists and historians have corroborated that they are indigenous to Crimea, descendants of the Khazars and of other local tribes. (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (97), 2010) (my translation)

He also assured readers that scholars had corroborated that the rulers of the Crimean Khanate, of the Grand Lithuanian Duchy, of the Russian Empire, and even of Nazi Germany knew about the Turkic origins of the Karaites. And, in his opinion, it is enough to refer to such books as the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, *Proishozhenie Tyurkov i Tatar* [Origin of Turks and Tatars] (Moscow, 2003: 6, 11), or *Tyurskie Narody Kryma: Karaimy, Krymskie Tatary, Krymchaki* [Turkic Peoples of Crimea: Karaites, the Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks] (Institut Etnologii I Antropologii, 2003) (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (97), 2010). The authors of the Polish-Karaite electronic periodical *Awazymyz*<sup>174</sup> were offended that the proposed title 'We are Karaites, Turkic People' for the movie *Extant Cultural Diversity* by the Discovery Channel was changed to 'We are Karaites'. In forum discussions, the Karaites claimed that the editing of the title was an attempt to hide the fact that the Karaites were a Turkic people, living in the heart of Europe since long ago (Sulimowicz 2006).

Petrov-Dubinskiy also criticised (*Karaimskie Vesti* 1 (107), 2013) the article about the Karaites in *Atlas of Cultures and Religions of Peoples of Russia* (*Narody Rossii* 2008). He argued that all Eastern European Karaites had originated in Crimea, and, consequently, they should have been called Crimean Karaites, not just Karaites (see more below). The authors of the article in the *Atlas* listed two theories on the origin of the Karaites: (1) they are descendants of Turkic peoples who converted to Karaism, (2) or they are Crimean Jews. Petrov-Dubinskiy accused the last statement of being non-scholarly and false, which in his opinion was taken from the most blatant anti-Karaite sources. He stated that even Krymchaks, who professed Judaism, were not Semites, and the Karaites, in his view, were even less Semitic. He referred to German and Italian scholars of the 1930s–1940s (see Chapter 5). Among other mistakes, he mentioned the statement that Karaism

<sup>174</sup> See the appendix 'Periodicals'.

was a religion related to Judaism. He argued instead that Karaism was related to Judaism as much as to Christianity because the Old Testament was a holy book for both Judaism and Christianity. Petrov-Dubinskiy mentioned that other editors of *Karaimskie Vesti* agreed with him on the above points (A.A. Babadjan, I.M. Rebrova, I.B. Novak, B.S. Taymaz).

At the same time, Karaite writers have not always supported arguments claiming a non-Semitic background for the Karaites. One of the reasons for this is the amateur nature of articles by Post-Soviet Karaite authors, who were not professional historians but had been educated in other disciplines and worked in other fields.

The Polish author Longin Graczyk noted that the Karaites try to keep information about their community secret from the general public. He wrote that Karaites had worked out a special 'politics of communication' for the group based on a strict control of what information can be told to the general public. He believes that they allegedly appointed specially prepared 'PR' persons for contact with the public. Their tasks included the shaping of social opinion. Graczyk did not know any case when Karaites would give answers to the media without a prepared agreement with leaders of the community. He reckons that the Karaite community in Poland did not leak information: it was almost impossible to get into contact with the group without the approval by special individuals, especially when seeking information that goes beyond the approved canon of knowledge (Graczyk 2012: 211). (This is reminiscent of the unwillingness of the Karaites to publish the periodical *Karaimskaya Zhizn* at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – see Chapter 4).

The author explained the phenomena based on historical reasons: the necessity to protect the group, particularity their religion, against accusations of the Jewish community, strict segregation from other communities, impermeability and a strict endogamy with respect to reproducing the community for a few hundred years. He added other reasons as well, such as the threat of splitting apart the Karaite community, a willingness to preserve traditions and the determination 'to be a Karaite' (Graczyk 2012: 211–212).

### **Terminology and Symbols**

Previous researchers has shown that the de-Judification process of the Crimean Karaites was probably the most noticeable in their change of terminology and symbols. Yu. Polkanov and other Crimean Karaite leaders proposed using the Karaite term *K'arai* [караи] to refer to the Eastern European Karaites. Another suggestion was to refer to each Karaite group according to their dialect: Crimean *Karai*, Lucko-Halich *Karai* and Trakai *Karai* (plural forms are *Karailar* in Turkic, *карайу* in Russian), or even *Karai-Turks* [карайу-тюрку] to emphasise their Turkic identity. Contemporary Karaite leaders suggested that the Turkic form *Karai* (singular) — *Karayi* (plural) [карау – карай] — should be used in the Russian language instead of the traditional *Karaim* –



*Karaimy* [караим-караумы] (*Karaimskaya Narodnaya Encyclopedia* 2007: 6; see also Levitskaya 1997: 141). Apparently, they preferred the term *Karai* to avoid confusion with the Hebrew term *karaim* (which reveals their Semitic background), and to avoid the Latin name *Karait* (which means ‘a black dog’ in Turkic) and to distinguish Eastern European Karaites from other Karaites of the world. Despite the above-mentioned efforts, Polish-Lithuanian Karaites have continued to use the traditional term *Karaimi*, just as many Russian-speaking Karaites use *Karaimy* (караумы).<sup>175</sup>

Recently, Crimean Karaites have tended to use the term *Crimean Karaims* [крымские караумы] (see, e.g. *Karaimskie Vesti* 1 (107) 2013) to refer to all Eastern European Karaite communities instead of the traditional *Karaimy* [караумы]. In doing so, Crimean Karaites probably, in a similar way as the Crimean Tatars, want to emphasise that all Eastern European Karaites allegedly originated from Crimea and to distance themselves from other Karaites of the world (Shabarovskyy 2013: 13). It is likely a type of ‘pan-Crimean Karaism’. I should note here that in the Karaite language, Karaites always referred to themselves as *Karaj* — *Karailar* (plural). However, the linguistic transfer of this terminology into the Russian language is a recent phenomenon.

Nevertheless, I do not quite agree with Volodymyr Shabarovskyy<sup>176</sup> that the term is immediately understandable in English-language texts, whether the author means a people when he uses the term *Karaims* or a religious group when he writes *Karaites* (Shabarovskyy 2013: 19). Though it may be true in some cases, we should consider that some Crimean Karaites have recently started using the term *Karai* instead of *Karaim* in Russian. However, in English they still use the traditional term *Karaite*. (For instance, a work by a Karaite named hazzan D. Tiriyaqi is called *Complex of the Karaite kenassa in Evpatoria*. Evpatoria, 2013. The author, nevertheless, believes in the Turkic origin of the Eastern European Karaites.)

The content of the terminology has also changed. It is noticeable that in the period of the Crimean occupation during World War II, the father of Yuriy Polkanov, Aleksandr Polkanov (1874–1971) (see Chapter 6 of this study), under the special circumstances of the threat of annihilation of the Jewish people, proposed an alternative interpretation of the term *Karaim*, along with the traditional interpretation from Hebrew meaning ‘a reading’ (Holy Scripture).<sup>177</sup>

Later, in the 1990s, his son, Yuriy Polkanov, argued that the original self-denomination *Karai* originated from an old Turkic and Mongolian-Turkic ethnonym *Kirei* — plural *Kireit* — from which originated the Turkic word *kara*, meaning ‘black’, i.e. ‘Northern’ or ‘ordinary’ people (Malgin 2000; Bogachevskaya 2003: 287).

Another of A. Polkanov’s ideas, which became popular in post-Soviet Karaite literature, is that the term *Karai* was originally a Turkic word and it resembles the Hebrew word *karai* only by coincidence. Levitskaya wrote that the root word *Kara* (meaning a simple or north people) was a component of many Turkic ethnonyms, e.g. Kara-Khazars or Karachays. This argument is partly

<sup>175</sup> See the ‘Introduction’ for more on the term.

<sup>176</sup> Volodymyr Shabarovskyy (Ukraine) is a student of local lore and historian of the Ukraine and Volyn’.

<sup>177</sup> Currently, Karaites try to avoid the term ‘Hebrew’, using the term ‘Old Biblical’ or ‘Aramaic’ instead.

true, but not in the case of the Karaites (Levitskaya 1997: 141). However, not all Karaites support this thesis. For instance, David Tiriya (2008: 6) and Mikhail Hafuz (Bogachevskaya 2003: 287–288; Hafuz 1993: 4) adhere to the argument for a traditional Semitic origin of the original name of the Karaites.

Roman Freund noted that post-Soviet Karaite authors often ascribe the etymology of Hebrew words in Karaite cultural heritage to Arabic origins rather than to Hebrew origins. At the same time, they deliberately misspell some Hebrew religious terms to add a Tatar sound to them (Freund 1991: 15–16). This process started in the 1930s, when S. Szapszał became head of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaite community and pursued a policy of the de-Judification of the Karaite cultural heritage. Here, I will give other striking examples of how some post-Soviet Karaite authors tried to avoid Hebrew terminology, substituting it with Turkic words or with words that sounded less Hebrew. For instance, they replaced *Emek Iosofat*, the traditional name for the Karaite graveyard in *Chufut Kale*, with the Turkic term *Balta Tiymez* (Seraya Szapszał was the first to use the term in the 1930s) (Kizilov 2003b: 125). They replaced the Hebrew term for a Karaite synagogue *beit a-kneset* (as well as the term *synagogue*) with *kenassa* or *kenese*, which has a Muslim origin. A. Zajqczkowski introduced the term in the 1930s, although the original term was of Hebrew origin — *keneset*. Instead of *hakham*, which originates from the Hebrew חכם, meaning a wise man, they used *gakham* or *hakhan* to create the impression that it had a Tatar provenance, as *khan* was the title used for a Tatar chieftain (Freund 1991: 16). Hence, the term and position of *hakhan* has existed since 1928, when Szapszał introduced it and used it together with *khan*. The Karaites also used the Turkic word *Tengri* for the name of God. The traditional Tatar name *Chufut Kale* (a pejorative form of ‘Jewish [Fortress]’) became first *Chuft Kale* in the 1930s and later *Djuft Kale* (Twin Fortress).<sup>178</sup> The last substitution is fair enough because *chufut* has indeed a pejorative meaning in the Tatar language.<sup>179</sup>

However, this tendency towards de-Judification is not found everywhere. There are some exceptions. For instance, Polish-Lithuanian Karaites use the Hebrew term *midrash* (a commentary on parts of Biblical scripture) for *midrash* in Trakai.

Karaites respect Turkic symbols today, as shall be discussed below. They had already used some of them before, but started to attach importance to them only in the post-Soviet period:

The Karaites adopted the Crimean Karaites’ coat-of-arms in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that they indeed borrowed the idea from the Crimean Tatars. It consists of a two-horned spear, (*senek-*

178 See more on the substitution of terminology in Shchegoleva (2007: 11).

179 Gazzan Levi-Babovich wrote in 1913:

‘In the past, Karaites tended to call Chufut-Kale by Chuft-Kale ‘— Twin Fortress ... but they do that for practical considerations in order not to mislead by the word “chufut”’ (Levi-Babovich 1913: 64) (my translation).

*tamgha*),<sup>180</sup> a shield (*kalan-tamgha*) and three battle towers (Kyrk Er: Kala, Djuft Kale and Kosh Kale).

They state that the colours of their emblem, which are blue, white and yellow, are their national colours (*Karaimskaya Narodnaya Encyclopedia* 2007: 6). Karaite ideologists Yuriy Polkanov and Anna Polkanova argue that these colours play a significant role among Turkic peoples. The Karaite flag and coat-of-arms have blue, white and yellow colours. The Karaites claim that these colours convey Turkic symbols. According to them, blue (*Kök* in Karaite) symbolises the sky and God. That is why, in their words, ancient Turks respected the colour blue a great deal. Polkanov also referred to the blue ceiling of Karaite *kenassas* and old houses, blue altar curtains and ostrich eggs suspended over the altar. Referring to Tyukhteneva (1995: 173–179), the Karaite authors wrote that the Altay people had tied blue, white and yellow ribbons to holy trees, which were devoted to the sky, the mountain of Altay and fire. They also mentioned other Turkic peoples who respected these same colours: the Kaçlar (Hakas) and Karachay-Balkars. The white colour (*Ak*) symbolises, in their opinion, clearness, kindness, happiness and sincerity. Yellow symbolises the sun and fire (from newspaper *Qirim Karailar*, 25 March 2009).

### **The Role of Religion**

Religion is no longer the main attribute of Karaite distinctiveness, as it used to be before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As we saw with the periodical *Karaimkoe Slovo*, (see Chapter 4 of this study), already at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Karaite intellectuals realised that they had to find another effective and distinctive feature for their ethnic unity to substitute for weakening religious practices. However, according to the above-mentioned surveys, religion (or its outward form — traditions) remain quite important for Karaites even today. Many Karaites believe that the Karaite people survived (i.e. did not completely assimilate) due to their religion. As the Karaite Aleksandr Dzyuba (from Kharkov) wrote:

Due to their unique religion, which became a connecting link with ethnicity, the people survived until the present day, despite the vicissitudes of fate. (*Karaimskie Vesti* 2 (89), 2009: 11) (my translation)

Another Karaite named Yu.N Suvorov (from Kharkov) wrote in a poem that if the ‘temple’ (he meant a Karaite *kenassa* in Kharkov) would be built, then the people would not die (*Karaimskie Vesti* 1 (82), 2008).

The Polish scholar Longin Graczyk also believed that religion remained a fundamental cultural aspect, one which distinguished the Karaites from others (Graczyk 2012: 211–212). The

<sup>180</sup> *Tamgha* was originally a clan market used by the nomads of the steppe. It was later adapted as a national symbol by 20<sup>th</sup> century Crimean Tatar nationalists (see Williams 2001: Glossary).

chief editor of the Karaite electronic periodical (in Russian) *Nash Golos* (see the appendix ‘Periodicals’), Tatiana Maszkiewicz, believed that:

We have been keeping traditions and have not lost our distinctiveness and ethnic self-consciousness thanks to the older generation. But the main source from which the people mustered a sense of vigour for spiritual resistance has been religion, which was preserved because of the functioning *kenassa* [in Trakai] during to the whole Soviet period. (Maszkiewicz 2008)

Another Karaite author, Kobeckate, argued that the Karaite people have been continued to exist and have retained a strong ethnic self-consciousness in Poland and Lithuania until today is because in Soviet Lithuania, the Karaites did not stop practicing their religious traditions. They did it in a modified, simplified form though, one which was transferred underground.<sup>181</sup>

However, in another article she wrote that because the Karaites had been living under such conditions (of the Soviet regime), many authentic elements of culture, religion and language had fallen by the wayside or even irrevocably disappeared, but the ethnic self-consciousness of the people survived (Kobeckaite 1997: 40).

According to the above-mentioned statistical survey of 1997 in Lithuania, Karaites participated actively in the life of their religious community. At the time of the survey, every Karaite was a member of the Karaite religious community (*Methodology and the Scope* 1997: 56). In answering the question, ‘What faith do you practise?’, 86% of Karaites indicated the Karaite religion (*Methodology and the Scope* 1997: 54). Today, the Karaite religion is recognised as one of the nine traditional religions in Lithuania (Kobeckaite & Pilecki 2005: 29).

The position of the Karaite religion is ambiguous nowadays. On the one hand, Karaite *kenassas* have mostly been returned to the Karaite communities, but they generally serve as places for secular meetings. Services are held in some of them, but in general religion has become forgotten. Karaite religious traditions have been lost to a great extent. Services are not held in Hebrew (which Karaites generally do not know anyways). Instead, they are held in the Karaite language, which almost nobody speaks. It includes some Biblical passages in Hebrew (Bogachevskaya 2003: 288–289). On the other hand, the Karaites have started to use new prayer books in their ethnic Karaite language.

Despite the negative prognoses of some non-Karaite scholars, I would like to mention that some improvements have recently been made thanks to the enthusiasm of a few Karaite individuals. Due to their efforts, a large *kenassa* opened in Evpatoria in 2005 (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (97) 2010: 1–2), and one floor of the *kenassa* in Simferopol was returned to the Karaites in autumn 2012. Services are held in both *kenassas* (*Karaimskie Vesti* 4 (106) 2012: 4).

<sup>181</sup> In 1951, during the Soviet times, the official activities of religious authorities ceased, a Karaite priest named S. Firkovich (1897–1982) moved religious rituals underground. Due to his activities, there was no child born without a prayer read on the occasion and no funeral carried out without a prayer (Kobeckaite 2008: 271).

Another significant event in the religious life of the Karaites was the ceremonial inauguration of the *hakhan* Mark Lavrinovich,<sup>182</sup> who was elected to the position in 2009. The event took place in the *kenassa* of Trakai in 2010. It was the first such election since the election of Seraya Szapszał to the position in 1928. The Karaites have not had a superior religious authority for 82 years (*Karaimskie Vesti* 4 (96), 2010: 2). Unfortunately, Mark Lavrinovich held the post only until 2011, when he passed away.

Despite the positive formal changes mentioned above, sources and scholars of Karaite studies have demonstrated that the current Karaite religious doctrine underwent a significant transformation from the original Karaite Judaism to a symbiosis of doctrines, including Christianity, Islam and even pagan traditions. The Karaite religious doctrine is based, according to post-Soviet Karaite authors, on Anan's teachings, which, as traditionally believed, emerged in Baghdad at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (current Karaite ideologists state that the Karaites are the only people in the world who retain an ethnic religion that they inherited from the Khazars (*Karai* 2000)). According to M.S. Sarach (see the appendix 'Biographies'), the Karaites were originally pagans, but in the 9<sup>th</sup> century they borrowed Anan's religious doctrine from the Khazars (*Karaimy i Moskva* 1997: 11). Yuriy Polkanov noticed that Anan had only formulated the final doctrine and united believers, but the roots of Karaite monotheistic religion date back to the first centuries AD, although it does not have anything in common with Judaism. He argued that the ancient monotheistic religion of the Karaites was not Judaism, but rather Tengriism, which later became mixed with Anan's doctrine (Polkanov 1997: 42). According to post-Soviet Karaite ideologists, the Karaites revere a single God — Tengri (*Tengri* means God in general in the Turkic languages, and both Karaites and Krymchaks used the term in their bilingual prayer books) (interview with M. Kizilov in *Lehaim*). Current Karaite authors have tried to move Karaism closer to that of a world religion. For instance, Yu. Polkanov pointed out that currently the Karaites acknowledge Moses, Jesus Christ and Muhammad as their main prophets (*Karai* 2000: 18–19). Kobeckaite also highlighted that Islam exerted a powerful influence on the formation and development of the Karaite religion (Kobeckaite 1997: 38). In my opinion, the Karaites refer to their connections with Islam and Christianity in order to, first of all, distance their religion from Judaism, emphasising instead their tolerance for Christians and Muslims, and thus to gain sympathy from those around them. In this connection, Bogachevskaya also noticed a tendency of the post-Soviet Karaite ideologists to construct parallels with Christianity and Islam. That is why, in her opinion, post-Soviet Karaite authors also emphasised that Anan considered Muhammad to be a prophet (Bogachevskaya 2003: 289).

Describing the essence of the Karaite religion, post-Soviet Karaite authors prioritised the ten moral commandments of the Holy Scripture as the basis for Judaism (*Karai* 2000: 19), which are

182 Mark Mikhailovich Lavrynovych (1938, Trakai – 2011) was *hachan* of the Lithuanian Karaites in 2009–2011. More in the appendix 'Biographies'.

the main principals of other religions, too. It seems that in doing so, Karaites have tried to draw attention away from the fact that Karaism has been considered a branch of Judaism, but and also to show that Karaism is based on the same principals as the three main world religions.

Another important recent transformation of Karaism was the Turkification of the religion. The Karaite A.A. Babadjan warned that it was undesirable to use the *menorah* because it was a symbol of Judaism (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (3) 2012: 11). He wrote that in his time, Karaites paid more attention ‘to the search for and restoration’ (or rather invention) of various relics of ‘ancient Turkic traditions’, such as worshiping the sky and trees, than to the original Karaite religion (Bogachevskaya 2003: 289). He was worried that trees in particular, rather than gravestones with Hebrew inscriptions, would have been the main object of veneration at the ‘ancestral graveyard of *Karais, Balta-Tiymez*’ in Chufut-Kale. He also considered the idea of the graveyard *Balta-Tiymez*, which today is not meant to be the last resting place of the Karaites’ ancestors, but rather as a holy grove belonging to the ancient Turks (Bogachevskaya 2003: 289).

Among other transformations of the Karaite religion was the cult of Holy Oaks, which Karaite intellectuals assert is a Khazar pagan tradition. As previously mentioned, currently the Karaites refer to the graveyard in Chufut-Kale as *Balta Tiymez*, which means that ‘it is not allowed to cut trees there’. Karaite authors (*Karai* 2000: 23), when referring to the traveller Pallas, who visited Chufut-Kale after its annexation by the Russian Empire at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Pallas 1801: 35), state that the Crimean khans and officials knew about that prohibition and used it to blackmail the Karaites. Thus, they allegedly threatened to cut down the trees as means of gaining leverage over the Karaites. Karaite writers argued that until the present day, Karaites had a custom of worshiping holy oaks in the *Balta Tiymez* graveyard, a tradition that has been actively revived. They referred to the academic K. Musaev, who wrote about the importance of worshiping oaks and Tengri (*Karai* 2000: 23).

Karaite authors maintain that as recently as in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during times of drought a procession of Karaites at *Djuft-Kale*, led by a *gazzan* (from Hebrew *hazzan* (חַזָּן), cantor, i.e. a Karaite clergyman),<sup>183</sup> carrying copies of the Old Testament went from the *kenassa* to the graveyard. There, close to the oak trees, they prayed for rain. Szapszał wrote that this custom did not correspond with the official religion, which was fighting against pagan remnants, but the Karaite clergy gave way to the will of the common people (*Karai* 2000: 23).

Editors of the brochure *Karai* (*Krymskie Karaimy* 2000) explained the lack of witnesses regarding the Karaite worship of oaks by the fact that the Karaites allegedly worshipped oaks secretly, especially during Soviet time. Such a practice ostensibly did not spread beyond certain Karaite circles (*Karai* 2000: 25–26).

183 It is a Russian-Karaim tradition to write *gazzan* and *gakham* with -g instead of the traditional *hazzan*, *hakham*.

However, not all Karaites believe that the tradition of worshipping oaks was an old authentic tradition. Some of them do not support the idea of worshipping oaks. For instance, the Polish Karaite Dubinski wrote that in Troki, nobody had heard about the supernatural power of oaks, which he called ‘controversial’. However, when he, together with other Karaite pilgrims, came to *Balta Timeyiz*, they leaned against the oak trees just as the local guides did just in case (Dubinski 2002). The Karaite Babadjan considered the worship of oaks as a contamination of the graveyard, especially when worshippers filled up the graveyard with fallen trees in the shape of celestial figures, which made it difficult to approach the graves. Babadjan emphasised that in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, many people had walked through the graveyard, and they had reported such acts of worships or, at least, they reported seeing celestial symbols or a collection of sticks around oaks. But as there were no actual eyewitnesses, it was difficult to confirm that such acts had indeed taken place (Babadjan 2007: 34–36; see also Babadjan 2006).

The Evpatorian gazzan David Tiriyaqi warned that paganism was a heavy sin for a Karaite religious individual. He explained the reasons why Karaite authors wrote inconsistently about Karaism when their views on the Karaite religion varied from it being a sect of Judaism to monotheistic syncretism with a predominance of pagan rituals. The reasons for such varied views had to do with the scantiness of literature in Russian (especially during the post-Soviet period), the unwillingness of authors to use pre-revolutionary materials (before 1917) about Karaites as well as foreign and domestic policies (Tiriyaqi 2008: 3).

On the current state of religion and Karaite society, A. Babadjan wrote in his article ‘Karaite Communities’ [*Karaimskie Obshchiny*] that nowadays, Karaites have established associations rather than communities because, at the heart of a community, there should be an ideology. Karaites used to have such an ideology — their religion; however, Babadjan believed that the current idea of the Turkic ethnic origin of Karaites was not enough for constructing a community (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (97) 2010). He criticised the idea of the rebirth of Tengriism because not enough of it could be retrieved to make for a coherent ideology. Tengriism itself, in his view, was inferior to Christianity as a religion. Babadjan viewed Tengriism as having done great damage because it had pushed Karaites away from their original Karaite religion towards Christianity and away from their Karaite culture towards a more European culture, which is solely based on Christianity. Babadjan believed that only when Karaites put the Karaite religion at the head of a community could the timid sprouts of Karaite communities take deeper root. Another problem, though, is that there are no experts in religious matters nowadays (*Karaimskie Vesti* 5 (97) 2010).

### **Relation to Territory**

Although the Karaites have never had their own territory (in terms of having their own state), they have had a special attachment to certain territories, which they identified themselves with. Polish Karaite writer Grzegorz Pełczyński has described in detail such a relationship between the Karaites and their territory (Pełczyński 2004). Pełczyński put forward the idea of two kinds of territory, a personal motherland and an ideological motherland. A personal motherland is a territory with a community living in it, which people identify with personal experience and personal identification. For instance, the Karaites were not indifferent to the places where they had been born and where they had their established communities. Polish-Lithuanian Karaites had five such places before the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Troki, Poniewież and Wilno (in Lithuania) and Łuck and Halicz (in Poland). A feeling of identity with these regions was quite strong, sometimes stronger than an ethnic affiliation (Pełczyński 2004: 80).

As for the ideological motherland, Pełczyński believed that it was rather a concept, for example a territory with a common origin for the whole Karaite community. Crimean Karaites harboured a feeling of Crimea as an ideological motherland, especially Chufut-Kale, and the Holy Land (before the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, on the other hand, harboured a feeling of the ideological motherland being Chufut-Kale, the Holy Land (before the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) and Poland-Lithuania. However, Pełczyński mentioned that it was peculiar that there was a lack of exclusive belonging to these territories among the Karaites, and therefore the Karaites had to share them with other larger peoples (Pełczyński 2004: 80, 82).

Both Crimean and Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, who, in their view, are groups of the same people, regard Crimea as their ideological motherland.<sup>184</sup> Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, in their own words, have never forgotten that they originated from Crimea and always remained in touch with Crimean communities (Pełczyński 2004: 83). According to Lutsk Karaite, Aleksandr Mardkovich (1875–1944)<sup>185</sup> (who published in *Karaj Awazy*<sup>186</sup>) and contemporary Polish Karaite Anna Sulimowicz (Sulimowicz 2008: 9–12), the claim to Crimean roots became one of the means of strengthen a feeling of belonging to the Crimean Karaite identity.<sup>187</sup>

According to the Karaites, a special place in Crimea — Chufut Kale together with the Josafat Valley — is a symbol of unity for Crimean and Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, and it serves as evidence of their former grandeur (Pełczyński 2004: 83).

As for the Holy Land, Karaites had a religious attitude towards it. The oldest *kenassa* in the world, which was allegedly established by Anan ben David himself, existed in Jerusalem. The most

184

‘Karaites have been worshipping Vytautas Magnus, who brought them from Crimea and settled them in Lithuania. The portrait of Vytautas Magnus can be seen in the most respectable place in the house of almost every Karaite’. (Karaimai Lietuvoje 1997: introduction).

This means that Karaites strongly identify themselves with Crimea.

185 See the appendix ‘Biographies’.

186 *Karaj Awazy* [Voice of the Karaites] is the first periodical exclusively published in the Karaite language (Luck, 1931–1939). See more in the appendix ‘Periodicals’.

187 For a reference to Mardkovich’s statement, see Sulimowicz 2008: 9–12.



religious Karaites made pilgrimage to Palestine. Polish-Lithuanian Karaites travelled to the Holy Land more often than Crimean Karaites, with exception of Abraham Firkovich, who obtained the status of *Hajji-Baba* (Pełczyński 2004: 83).

Pełczyński noticed that Polish Karaites also started to identify themselves more with Poland after World War I, when the Second Polish Republic was established (Pełczyński 2004: 83). Karaites also have been strong Polish patriots. The boom in Polish patriotism among Karaites began in 1918. The Karaites acknowledged Poland as their motherland and began to often call themselves Polish Karaites to stress their relationship with it. In the interwar period, Karaites were not only loyal to Poland (they have always been very tolerant of and loyal to any authority and country in which they have lived) but also felt a strong patriotism towards it (Pełczyński 1995: 58).

I would also add Trakai (in Lithuania) to the list of the ideological motherlands of the Karaites. Karaite author Halina Kobeckaite wrote that Trakai was, and still is, the centre of Karaite spiritual life — their Mecca. She mentioned that currently, Trakai has played this role even for the Crimean Karaites, whose ethnic identity was damaged considerably during the eighty years of the Soviet regime. Thus, it was not incidental that the first meeting of compatriots was held in Trakai in 1989. It was attended by over five hundred Karaites from different countries — Poland, Russia and Ukraine (Lutsk, Halich, Crimea) (Kobeckaite 1997: 39).

### **Role of Social Media in Contemporary Karaite Self-Identification**

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Karaites created a virtual community (*wirtualny dżymat*)<sup>188</sup> on the Internet. The web community started to carry out a multi-functional role of serving as a virtual territory for Karaites and became a means of constructing their ethnic identity (Graczyk 2008: 325).

The Polish-Karaite site *karaimi.org* holds a special place among other Karaite web sites. It represents the Social and Cultural Association of Polish Karaites (*Związek Karaimów Polskich*, in the Karaite language *Esawdahy Karajłarnyn Odžahy LR*), which was registered in Poland in January 1998. Its first activity took place in 2003, though, when the organisational meeting (*Karai Kiuńlari*) took place (Abkowicz 2012: 202). The site also hosts the publishing houses of *Bitik* and *Dostlar*.

On the one hand, we can agree with Graczyk that the portal *karaimi.org* can be regarded as a representative of the Karaite people of Poland and as a business-card of the community (Graczyk 2012: 213). It is also a symbol of Karaite culture. Karaite ethnic symbols appear on the web page: emblems of the Karaites from Troki; pictures of the Troki *kenessa* (a Karaite term for kenassa) and

188 [karaimi.org](http://karaimi.org), [karaimi.home.pl](http://karaimi.home.pl), [firkowscy.pl](http://firkowscy.pl), [awazymyz.karaimi.org](http://awazymyz.karaimi.org), [jazyszlar.karaimi.org](http://jazyszlar.karaimi.org), [dostlar.karaimi.org](http://dostlar.karaimi.org), [karaim.eu](http://karaim.eu), [karaites.narod.ru](http://karaites.narod.ru) and others.

pictures of the Karaite community of Troki. The style of the pages is in the form of ornamental oriental carpets. Many participants in the forum at *karaimi.org* have nicknames in the Karaite language: *Oczar* – local, *Tanysz* or *Dost* – acquaintance, *Jubij* – host, *Karasakal* – Black-beard or *Aksakal* White-beard, and so forth.

On the other hand, the Karaite web sites are places for communication: they have helped integrate the Karaites of Poland and Lithuania (Graczyk 2008: 326).

The web sites also create the feeling of a common identity and a sense of belonging; they support group knowledge and memory about a common origin (see also Graczyk 2012: 213). They are also a source of information and a place of publication, such as the e-periodical *Awazymyz* by the publishing house *Bitik* and the creative teamwork of the publisher *Dostlar* (Graczyk 2012: 213). They are places for dialogue and the exchange of viewpoints; they are places where contemporary Karaites have been building their ethnic identity, preserving and determining its boundaries in relation to, for instance, participants from other ethnic groups participating in the online forums. Karaites, for example, have asked participants the question, '[Are you] ours or not ours?' (*Nasz czy nie nasz?*), applying Frideric Barth's theory of ethnic boundaries being about 'us and them' (Graczyk 2012: 213, 217). Karaites try to reconstruct their ethnic identity in social media and to find a shared ethnic consciousness. The Internet helps create an imagined community, a model of community constructed from various components, emerging from the sense of a shared identity and belonging with others from a specific group. It facilitates a willingness to keep group contacts and memory of a common origin alive (Graczyk 2012: 213, 217). Thus, in the past few years, Karaites have redefined their identity with the help of interactive media (Graczyk 2008: 330).

Longin Graczyk asked, 'If a Karaite virtual community is a constructed community, then who creates that construction?' He offered a few answers: the 'construction of a group identity is not so much an action by members of a group, but rather of elites within the group or of leaders of the organisation. Another possibility is that groups are formed as a consequence of the activities of the state, authorities and administration, whose administrative regulations give to different groups a durability and concreteness with respect to their social and political realities' (Graczyk 2012: 225). As M. Herzfeld wrote, 'Identities are negotiated and reflect political reality, (...) changes of (political) model can cause redefinition of ethnic identity' (Herzfeld 2006: 243).

According to the Polish-Karaite website, Polish Karaites often have either ambiguous or mixed ethnic and civic identities. They say about themselves, 'I feel myself to be a Karaite and a Pole', 'I am a Pole of Karaite origin' or 'I belong to the Karaite faith and live in Poland' (Graczyk 2012: 226). Now, in the age of social media, a person might see himself/herself as a Polish Karaite by participating in a Karaite forum (Graczyk 2012: 226). Thus, Karaite Internet sites serve as an additional way of preserving their ethnocultural identity and as a source for its study.

## **Summary of the Period and Analysis of the Change in Karaite Self-identification in Comparison with Earlier Periods**

From the end of the 1980s, we can observe a renaissance of Karaite culture. Significant changes have indeed occurred in post-Soviet Karaite culture and Karaite self-identification in comparison with the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and especially with the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

First, in comparison with the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Turkic theory of Karaite 'ethnogenesis' is currently not optional anymore. It is an assertive position supported by most Eastern European Karaite authors. Under the influence of the Crimean Tatar theory of ethnogenesis, Crimean Karaite authors have included in their list of ancestors the Khazars, Huns, Sarmato-Alans and Goths as well as the Kyrks, Uzuns, Naymans, Kara, Sars and Cumans. They also wrote that Karaites had common roots with the Crimean Tatars, Kyrgyzs, Karachai-Balkars, Cumyks, Kazakhs and Bashkirs. In contrast to the Karaites, Crimean Tatars have a shorter list of ancestors, which excludes the Khazars. The Polish-Lithuanian Karaite authors are also more modest in their efforts, only including the Khazars, Kipchaks and Cumans in the list of Karaite ancestors, just as they did in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Zajączkowski's and Szapszał's articles in Chapter 5 of this study).

Second, according to present-day Karaite authors, Karaite ethnicity and Karaite religion do not necessary coincide. Polish and Karaite scholars of the interwar period (Zajączkowski, Kowalski, Szapszał) were among the first to put forward this thesis (see Chapter 5 of this study). For example, according to Tiriyaqi, ethnic Turks profess Karaism in Eastern Europe, while ethnic Arabs profess Karaism in the Middle East (thus, currently Karaites regard themselves as a people, not a religious group).

According to Karaite authors and the above-mentioned surveys, nowadays the sense of an emotional connection with a widely understandable Karaite culture and community is more important for Karaite self-identification than Karaite religion, the ability to speak the language or biological belonging to a Karaite ethnic group (because mixed marriages among Karaites are quite common these days).

Third, Karaites do not regard Karaism as a branch of Judaism anymore, but as a separate religion that is related to Judaism as much as it is to Christianity. Some contemporary Karaite authors believe that Karaites were originally pagans, but in the 9<sup>th</sup> century they borrowed the religious doctrine of Anan from the Khazars. Karaites state that they are the only people in the world who have an ethnic religion that they inherited from Khazars. Thus, they are more preoccupied with 'finding and restoring' (or rather inventing) ancient Turkic traditions, like worshipping the sky and trees, than with restoring the original religion, which was forgotten during Soviet times. Syncretism is the religion of Eastern European Karaites now.

Fourth, contemporary Karaites consider themselves to be part of the Turkic, not Jewish, culture. Karaite authors do not mention Jews as their forefathers. Turkic symbols — *tamgha* and the blue-white-yellow flag (probably, influenced by Crimean Tatars) — are common. Substituting Hebrew terms with Turkic or other terms (*Dzuft Kale*, *Balta Timeiz*, *Tengri*) is an established practice among most Eastern European Karaite authors. Currently, the most outstanding figure for Karaites is Seraya Szapszał (1873–1961), the active Turkificator of Karaite culture and tradition, rather than Abraham Firkovich (1786–1874), who used previously been considered the most eminent of Karaite scholars.

Fifth, just as at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they changed their name from Karaite Jews to Russian Karaites. Nowadays, Crimean Karaites tend to call all Eastern European Karaites Crimean Karaites (again, it is probably an influence of the Crimean Tatars).

Sixth, Karaite web sites started to carry out a multifunctional role of creating a virtual territory for Karaites and became the means for constructing their ethnic identity.

Karaites, together with Tatars, regard themselves as locals in (indigenous to) the Crimean Peninsula. The idea appeared already in the 1930s, when a Russian-French scholar named Bashmakoff claimed that the Karaites together with the Tatars were the local inhabitants of Crimea.

Thus, according to the material examined for this study, Eastern European Karaites of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are like two different peoples. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were Karaite Jews with a Judeo-Semitic cultural-religious identity and Karaite Judaism; they did not consider themselves to be an ethnic group. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, they are Karaite Turks with a Turkic ethnocultural identity and Karaite religion, which combines the religious traits of paganism, Karaite Judaism, Old Testament moral norms and the prophets of Islam and Christianity.

### **Reasons for the Identity Transformations of the Karaites**

One of the main questions here then is, why do the Karaites adhere to Turkic culture nowadays more than ever before? More than during the time of the Russian Empire? More than during Nazi and Stalin threats of annihilation or deportation?

One of the main reasons why they insist on claiming an ancient Turkic origin and emphasise their unique Turkic culture is probably as a way of surviving as a people and not assimilating. Being a unique people has allowed them to remain distinct from the Jews of the post-Soviet area.

Another reason was probably a Karaite willingness to obtain an official indigenous status in Crimea. Undoubtedly, the Crimean Tatars inspired them to adopt this idea (see below). Karaite and Crimean Tatar statuses were not officially fixed under Ukrainian law, but they hoped to change that fact.<sup>189</sup> Note that as of 18 March 2014, Crimean Karaites have been under the jurisdiction of

<sup>189</sup> Gaps in Ukrainian law regarding the official status of ethnic groups results in a vague understanding of their rights, which causes heated debates and provokes the strengthening of ethnic boundaries and, as a result, contributes to ethnic

Russian Federation law. V.I. Kefeli, referring to Polkanov, wrote that Karaites were undoubtedly the most ancient inhabitants of Crimea; they bear a history of the pre-Mongol period, which is reflected in their language and anthropological type (Polkanov 1994; Kefeli 2007: 7). He seems to have borrowed this idea from the Crimean Tatars. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Crimean Karaites have tried to emphasise the close relationship between Karaite and Crimean Tatar cultures. Thus, Kefeli wrote that Crimean Tatar culture gradually became mixed with ancient Turkic and Crimean Tatar culture to form a common Karaite ethnic identity (Kefeli 2007: 7).

Karaites were planning to hold a conference in Halych (Ukraine) in September 2014 on the issue of recognising the Karaite religion as an independent religion in Ukraine (in Ukraine, Karaism had a status of being a branch of Judaism) (*Karaimskie Vesti* 3 (105) 2012). However, it seems that the conference failed to materialise because of political developments in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Instead, a conference of Ukrainian Karaite communities was held in Melitopol. Crimean Karaites, who became citizens of the Russian Federation, did not participate in the conference. Participants of the conference had an online meeting with Vladimir Ormeli, who was one of the Crimean Karaite leaders.<sup>190</sup>

For now, most members of the Karaite communities in Eastern Europe identify themselves as being a Turkic people, and they have lost their Judaic and Semitic traditions and identity. Namely, a Turkic identity is the new identity of post-Soviet Eastern European Karaites. Based on a lack of opposition among local Eastern European Karaites, we can conclude that most Karaites accept the Turkic theories proposed by Yuriy Polkanov, Sarach, Petrov-Dubinskiy and other Karaite intellectuals mentioned in this chapter. The theories became a part of their self-consciousness and a basis for their current identity. Bogachevskaya wrote in 2003 that currently, Karaites are those people who Yuriy Polkanov and other post-Soviet Karai ideologists have created.<sup>191</sup> They are an imagined community, as Benedict Anderson would describe it; but, as he mentioned, this does not mean that the imagined community is not real.

I agree with the authors<sup>192</sup> who argue that the post-Soviet Turkification of the Karaites was presumably partly generated by the mass repatriation of Tatars to Crimea beginning in the late the 1980s (after implementation of Gorbachev's policy of openness (*glasnost*) and the collapse of the USSR), the rebirth of Tatar culture in Crimea and their struggle for the official status of 'indigenous peoples'.<sup>193</sup> Tatars have influenced the activities of the Karaites. The Karaites, Krymchaks (Crimean Rabbanites) and Crimean Tatars have cooperated with each other in pushing for an indigenous

tension on the peninsula (see in Biletskaya 2010: 186).

190 *Zaporizska Oblastna Derzhavna Administratsiya*: <<http://www.zoda.gov.ua/news/24360/karajimi-ukrajini-objednujutsya-zaradi-zberezheniya.html>> (accessed 24.07.2014).

191 Ibid.

192 A. Malgin. *Novoe v samosoznanii* 2000. [Online]. Available at: <http://ok.archipelag.ru/part2/novoe.htm>; Irina V. Bogachevskaya. *Sovremennye transformatsii* (2003: 290).

193 Tatars are regarded as a 'national minority'. However, they fight against this status, trying to obtain the status of the 'indigenous people' of Crimea, referring to the fact that they evolved as an ethnic group in the territory of Crimea, and thus, they do not have any other motherland (Bekirov 1995: 58-76).

status. It is likely that the desire to obtain an indigenous status would tempt post-Soviet Karaite ideologists to manipulate ethnic theories for political/status interests. According to Ukrainian law, an 'indigenous status' does not grant special benefits to indigenous peoples, but it does give them a more respectable social status than being 'a national minority'. However, if they obtain an indigenous status, as an indigenous people they would be able to refer to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007, to claim to their political, economic and cultural rights (Biletskaya 2010).<sup>194</sup> For example, they could demand the right to study in their ethnic language or to expect assistance from the state in preserving their cultural heritage.

Another probable reason for the post-Soviet transformation of Karaite identity, which A. Malgin has pointed out, was ideological, a desire by the Karaites to occupy an adequate place in contemporary independent post-Soviet countries. The older religious identity was no longer suitable for the purpose. It is not 'fashionable' to build an identity based on religion nowadays. Ethnic and national ideas are more relevant in the contemporary world. Moreover, to have a Jewish identity has never been beneficial in the territories of Eastern Europe, nor is it now, because old anti-Semitic stereotypes are still alive to some extent there. It is likely that it is more beneficial and acceptable for post-Soviet Karaites to emphasise their Turkic identity.

### **Endnote: The Crimean Tatar National Movement**

The Crimean Tatar National Movement, which started with their return to the peninsula in 1989, apparently influenced the Karaite national movement in Crimea.<sup>195</sup> In contrast to the Karaites' proto-national movement, the Crimean Tatar movement can be regarded as national based on their demand to consider Crimea as their homeland and to receive an indigenous status (so-called territorial nationalism – see the Chapter on theory).

194 Ukraine, though, abstained from voting for the adoption of the declaration and the Russian Federation voted against it. See the *Declaration* at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/indigenous/declaration.htm> (accessed 29.04.2014)

While it is not legally binding to nations, and does not, therefore, impose legal obligations on governments, the declaration carries considerable moral force. Effective implementation of the declaration would result in significant improvements in the global situation of indigenous peoples. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.iwgia.org/human-rights/international-human-rights-instruments/undeclaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples> (accessed 29.04.2014).

195 With the implementation of Gorbachev's policy of openness (*glasnost*) and the collapse of the USSR, approximately half of the CIS's population of 500,000 Crimean Tatars have returned with great difficulty to the Crimean 'Homeland'. This strange migration of car convoys, entire collective farms and neighbourhoods was not a spontaneous event, but rather a well-organised action, as were the subsequent land seizures in Crimea by returning Crimean Tatars.

'This period was accompanied by the subsequent clashes between the Crimean Tatar "returnees" (many of whom had never seen the Crimea) and Russian-Crimean authorities in the early 1990s, attempts by the Russian-dominated authorities of the Crimea to destroy Crimean Tatar settlements (known as *samozakhvats* – self-seized settlements), the struggle to gain representation in the Russian-dominated Crimean parliament and difficulties (such as de-urbanization) related to the process of resettlement in the Crimea' (Williams 2001: 411).

Let us look at the Crimean Tatars' theory of their ethnogenesis to trace any possible parallels with the Karaite theory.

The Crimean Tatar movement is a very secular national movement based on a unique, territorialised communal identity.<sup>196</sup> The history of the Crimean Tatars has largely been shaped by their experience of migration and nationalism, which also played a significant role in the shaping of their group identity (Williams 2001: 1–5). Their national trauma of being expelled from their homeland<sup>197</sup> has served to mobilise and politicise a previously latent national identity (Williams 2001: 413). By contrast, the Karaites did not suffer a similar historic trauma, and hence, their national movement has been much more passive in nature (another reason is their small number). Had the Crimean Tatars been given full political rights and recognition of their ethnicity, they might not have been so active in defending their endangered national identity (Williams 2001: 413).

Since the collapse of the Communist regime in Eastern Europe, history has become a contested subject and a battlefield for nationalists and various nationalities in the region. The roots of many struggles lay in a competing nation's historic claims to the same territory. The nationalities

196

'Starting from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Tatar intellectuals were constructing the idea of Crimea not as an adjunct of the Russian Empire, or an infidel-ruled land to be abandoned in order to preserve one's Islamic identity, but as a unique "Fatherland" or "Homeland" (Vatan) for the Tatars of Crimea. Intellectuals among the Crimean Tatars were exposed to Western nationalism and borrowed allegories of blood mixed with soil, the sacredness of one's home place, the rights of nations to a territory defined as a Fatherland or Patrie etc. to construct Crimea as a (Vatan) Homeland in the Western nationalist sense. An educated elite encouraged the Muslim Tatars of Crimea to see themselves as an *ethno-linguistic nation* (my italics) with a unique national claim to the idealized soil of the Crimean homeland. The great Islamic reformer Gaspirali started this process by emphasizing the ethno-linguistic (not Islamic) aspects of his imagined community which was the greater Turkic nation (the Crimean Tatars were seen by Gaspirali as simply a component of a much larger Eurasian Turkic as Azeris, Volga Tatars, Kazakhs, Uzbeks etc.). Younger Crimean Tatars with a more narrowly-defined, political outlook took Gaspirali's ethnocultural ideas and applied them not to the Turkic people, but to their more narrowly defined imagined community, the Tatar national-community of the Crimean Peninsula' (Williams 2001: 412).

'In the process these early nationalists began to compete with the Crimean Tatars' traditional communal leaders, the Islamic ulema, for the hearts and minds of their people. In so doing this small nationalist intelligentsia condemned religiously-sponsored migration to the lands of the Muslim Empire (the Ottoman Empire) as a betrayal of the Crimean Tatar "nation" and "homeland". This was a revolutionary break with a time-honored Crimean Muslim tradition of abandoning the Crimea for the *ak toprak* (holy or white soil of the Ottoman Caliph) and laid the seeds for the later dissemination of a sense of territorialized national identity to the Crimean Tatar masses. In the process the concept of the Crimea as a Homeland began, for the first time, to reach the Muslim masses in the Crimea' (Williams 2001: 145–167, 301–333).

197

'The Soviet period of Crimean Tatar history is characterized by the exiled Crimean Tatars' long struggle against the Soviet regime to return to a homeland that this nation, which had become very territorialized and nationalized during the early Soviet period and even more so during the *surgun* (exile), saw as its only legitimate home place. In this period, the Crimean Tatar people's attachment to the Crimean homeland went from passive to politically active as a result of their communal deportation and continuing ethnically-based oppression under the Soviets. The trans-generational narratives of the homeland linked new generations of Tatars growing up in exile in Central Asia to Crimea as a romanticized homeland (the so called *Yeshil Ada* – Green Isle). This unique example of an entire people living in exile but refusing to accept their places of "resettlement" as permanent has gone largely unnoticed by the outside world. Far from assimilating into the Central Asian Turco-Islamic milieu as the Soviet government obviously intended, the exiled Crimean Tatars were led by such dynamic dissident leaders as Mustafa Dzhemilev Kirimoglu in fighting for the right to return to their national homeland. All efforts to provide alternative solutions to the Crimean Tatar "problem" (such as state-sponsored discussions on the establishment of an autonomous Crimean Tatar homeland-autonomy in Uzbekistan) or to de-nationalize the Crimean Tatars were rejected by this politically mobilized people who waged a determined dissident struggle to sustain their group identity and return their entire nation to its historic homeland' (Williams 2001: 374–390).

of the post-USSR territories, including Crimea, determine their political identities and territorial claims based on their 'national histories'. Among such nationalities are the Crimean Tatars, who were undeservedly expelled from Crimea in 1944 and are now actively asserting their rights to the territory (Williams 2001: 7). The Crimean Tatars returning to Crimea since the collapse of the Soviet Union believe that they are the indigenous autochthonous population of Crimea (and they truly are in comparison with Russians and Ukrainians, who came to the Peninsula later) and they claim a special right to this land based on centuries of their historical presence in the region. The Crimean Tatars resented Soviet efforts to portray them as relatively late Mongol-era 'occupiers' of Crimea and have stressed their pre-Mongol 'roots' on the peninsula (Williams 2001: 7–8).<sup>198</sup>

Brian Williams believes that the Crimean Tatar claim to pre-Mongol 'roots' in the peninsula is not entirely groundless (Williams 2001: 25). They are reinforced by travellers' accounts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who allegedly found descendants of the Goths among the Tatars. Thus, one 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russian visitor to the Gothic region of the south-western mountains was convinced that, 'In all probability, their (the Goths') descendants are the Tatars of a series of villages in Crimea who [can be] sharply delineate[d] from the inhabitants of neighbouring villages by their tall height and other features characteristics of the Scandinavians' (Vozgrin 1992: 94). Seen in this light, it is not surprising that the contemporary Crimean Tatars describe themselves as the descendants of 'the Circassians, Goths, ancient Greeks, Italians and Armenians' and do not identify with the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Mongol invaders (Kazinski 1991: 124). Similar to the Tatars, the Karaites searched for glorious ancient ancestors and found them in the Khazars.

A Soviet anthropologist, B. Kuftin, mentioned that with the Turkification and Islamisation of the 'Greek-aborigines', 'Greco-Goths' and 'a portion of Armenians', the cultural and linguistic differences between these people and the Tatars decreased (Kuftin 1992: 241; Keppen 1837: 135). In the process, these ancient peoples began to adopt the language, religion and customs of the dominant Kipchak Tatars. The subsequent amalgamation of the population of the ancient mountains and the coasts with the Kipchak-Tatars of the plains led to the formation of a uniquely Crimean version of the 'Tatar' ethnic group. The mixed 'Tatars' who came into being in the Crimean

198 Thus, the Crimean Tatar historian, Aider Memetov, wrote:

'Up to our present day, the naive view has not died that the Crimean Tatars are the direct descendants of the Mongol conquerors who penetrated Crimea in the 13th century' (Memetov 1993: 2).

Mustafa Dzhemilev, the pre-eminent post-World War II leader of the Crimean Tatar national movement, justified his people's claim to the Crimean peninsula to the 1997 Congress of European National Minorities on historical grounds claiming:

'The self-designation of our people, "Crimean Tatar", leads many people to error and they depict us only as the direct descendants of the Tatar-Mongols who invaded the Crimea at the beginning of the 13th century. In point of fact, they are a people formed in the territory of the Crimea peninsula. Over the course of many centuries, many tribes and peoples settled in the territory of the Crimea. Regimes, dictators, religions and cultures changed, but in those times, as is well known, mass deportations, the genocide of peoples and ethnic cleansing of territory was not practised – this became sufficiently frequent only in our enlightened century. Therefore, with a firm basis, it may be confirmed that in the formation of the Turkish base of our Crimean Tatar nation, there are definite waves of all races and ethnic groups who settled in the Crimea from ancient times' (Dzhemilev 1997: 3).



Peninsula differed in many ways from the Tatar populations of the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan and the ‘pure’ Tatar nomads of the steppes of the Desht-i-Kipchak, known as the Nogais (Williams 2001: 27).<sup>199</sup> When Christian Armenians, Italians and Greeks converted to Islam, they left their Christian ethno-religious community and adopted the ethnonym Tatar, i.e. Muslim (Williams 2001: 29). Thus, Yalibou-Tats, Mountain Tats of the south and Nogais of the north formed the foundation of a new people who gradually internalised a vague sense of *Kirim Tatarlık* (‘Crimean Tatariness’) despite their variegated ethno-linguistic backgrounds (Williams 2001: 29).

Thus, the Crimean Tatars can be seen as a heterogeneous ethnic group having its roots deep in Crimean antiquity and claiming to be descendants from earlier ethno-religious groups who had occupied the diverse terrains of the peninsula since the time of the Scythians and Greeks (Williams 2001: 29).

However, over the centuries the Crimean Tatar ethnic sub-groups lost any communal memory of their distinct ancient forbears, such as the Scythians, Huns, Kipchaks, Goths, Italians, Armenians and Greeks, in favour of an identity related to Tatar-Islamic cultural and religious traditions. It was only in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that Russian, French, English and German traveller-historians began to uncover the Crimean Tatars’ long-forgotten roots in Crimea’s murky past. (The same as the Karaites began to uncover their past in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the activities of the Karaite A. Firkovich – see Chapter 4). During the early Soviet period, previous research was continued ‘with greater sophistication by an army of trained archaeologists, anthropologists, historians and linguists who sought to provide all Soviet nations with a secular Marxist ‘national history’ (Williams 2001: 30).

Marxist historians, in fact, created a new perception of the Crimean Tatars, including their origins, communal identity and links to their homeland (Borozdin 1927: 119). Just as the Romanians could claim links to Dacians and Romans, Albanians to Illyrians, or English to Celts, Saxons and Vikings, so too Crimean Tatars could now proudly proclaim that they had roots in the soil of Crimea dating back to distant ancestors: the Scythians, Sarmatians, Greeks, Armenians, Italians, Kipchaks and Goths. (The Karaites also added these ethnicities to the list of their ancestors.) Crimean Tatars had native ‘roots’ in the soil of their homeland that had been planted long before the arrival of Islam or the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Mongol invaders. As such, Crimean Tatars were

199

‘However, the Crimean Tatars are not a homogeneous ethnic group. The sub-ethnic differences in lifestyle, history, dialect, physiognomy, and economic activity between the “Tatars” of the coastal mountains on the one hand and those of the northern plains on the other remained until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With their light-skinned, Europeoid features and an economy based on mountain terrace farming and vertical transhumant sheep herding, the mountain Tat-Tatars’ way of life differed markedly from that of the nomadic Kipchak-Tatar cattle herders who roamed the open plains of the northern steppe lands of Crimea and southern Ukraine’ (Williams 2001: 27).

‘While the language of the coastal Tatars was, after the 1475 Ottoman conquest, Turkish derived from the Oghuz branch of the Turkic language, the language of the mountain Tats was strongly influenced by the Kipchak branch of Turkic spoken by the Nogai Tatar nomads of the northern Crimean steppe and was also considered uncouth by the Tat Tatars (Yalibou Tats or Coastal Tats) living on the southern coast. The Nogai Tatar nomads thus became a vital ethnic component in Crimea, but they were looked down upon by the sedentary Tat-Tatars of the Crimea’s south’ (Williams 2001: 27).

recognised as the *korennoy narod* (rooted or native/indigenous people) of a short-lived Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which existed from 1921 to 1945 (Williams 2001: 31–32).

After the brutal deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944, the history of the punished ‘non-people’ was rewritten by official historians. They refuted the Crimean Tatars’ ancient ties to their former homeland. In the newly revised official histories of Crimea, Crimean Tatars were known as ‘Tatar-Mongol interlopers’ and, according to new speculation (based on political exigency, not anthropology), their homeland lay somewhere ‘in the depth of Asia’ (Yakobson 1973: 104). Slavic Russians and Ukrainians who moved into the lands left by the deported Crimean Tatars in the 1940s and 1950s learned that the Crimean Peninsula had in fact been Slavic since antiquity and not Tatar (Williams 2001: 32).

Since their return to Crimea from Central Asian exile in the 1990s, the Crimean Tatars have become interested in uncovering their people’s hidden history. One fact becomes clear: the Crimean Tatars of today consider themselves to be the indigenous, autochthonous population of Crimea, and this perception has strongly shaped their national ideology and views of their ancient rights to the Crimean land. They are particularly assertive in stressing their ancient pre-Mongol roots in Crimea (Williams 2001: 34). The following claim is typical:

Therefore, in turning to the Crimean landscape and its native people, we point out that the native ethnos of Crimea, namely the ethnic expression of its original nature, appears in the Crimean Tatars, the *Crimean Karaims* and the *Krymchaks* – autochthons going back 2,500 years in antiquity. (my italics) (Kudusov 1992: 5)

Note that it seems that the Crimean Tatars do not just consider themselves to be an indigenous nation in Crimea, but also the Crimean Karaites and Krymchaks.

Using historical sources, which had been long forbidden to them, Crimean Tatar historians returning from Central Asia have proclaimed that they were a people formed in Crimea and, as such, they (and they alone!) are the true ‘ethnic expression’ of its soil (Williams 2001: 34) (probably except for the Crimean Karaites and Krymchaks).

Many Tatars today have begun to look critically at their history and to question the ‘Tatar’ component of their ethnonym, which is seen as a false Mongol-era addition to their ancient Crimean name (Williams 2001: 35). A lively debate has begun among them as to whether or not their nation should in fact simply be called Crimeans (*Kırımlılar*), an ethnonym related to their fundamental identification – the name of their homeland, a name that implicitly rejects their links to the steppe, their nomadic heritage, and, most importantly, the Mongols (Abdullaev 1997: 2–3). It is similar to the fact that some post-Soviet Karaite authors call all Eastern European Karaites (Crimean, Polish-Lithuanian and Russian) Crimean Karaites.

Emil Amit has provided a historical basis for distancing the Crimean Tatars from the Tatar roots of their identity:

The present-day Tatars are the descendants of earlier tribes who lived in these places before Batu Khan; they were conquered just as the Russians were ... It was, however, in someone’s

interest not to take note of the differences between the Mongol conquerors and the tribes conquered by them, for whom subsequently the name, but not self-designation (!) Tatar was attached. (Amit 1993: 81)

Another author wrote:

The ethnonym 'Crimean Tatars' was given to the Crimeans by their northern neighbours, essentially by the Russians, for whom all Turks, without exception, were called Tatars. (Kudusov 1996: 11)<sup>200</sup>

Since their repatriation, the Crimean Tatars have fought to be recognised in international forums on national rights as an officially recognised indigenous ethnic group of Crimea. If they would be recognised as an indigenous people, they could have their representatives in the Crimean government (Williams 2001: 445). As Bogachevskaya noted, the Karaites also strove to gain representation in the local government. The Crimean Tatars now are striving to receive similar rights given, for example, to the Sámi in the Norwegian Assembly. One Mejlis leader, Refat Chubarov, stated that in his opinion:

The Crimean Tatars, as well as some other ethnic communities of Crimea (Karaims, Krymchaks, and Urums in the past), are the indigenous people of the peninsula, and the volume of their rights should be outlined by international standards in areas of people's rights, including indigenous ... In my statement, I have always underlined that we differ from other ethnic communities of Crimea because we are an indigenous people. (Aydin 1998: 3)

This emphasis on the Crimean Tatars' unique indigenous claim to Crimea has led to an often uncompromising approach by the Crimean Tatar leadership (Williams 2001: 446). At its most extreme, it has been pointed out that the Crimean Tatar ideologues has developed 'a complete ethnological theory which claims that no one besides the Crimean Tatars has the right to be called 'Crimean people' (Guboglo & Chervonnaya 1992: 238).

According to Gubogo and Chervonnaya, the Crimean Tatar nationalist leaders consider all nationalities in Crimea (probably except for the Karaites and Krymchaks) to be 'non-Tatars' or 'cultures', 'diasporas', 'enclaves', 'Slavic masses' or even 'colonists', but not 'people of Crimea' (Williams 2001: 446).

They have a strong geographically based identity: Crimean Tatars often repeat as a mantra that they have only one homeland, Crimea, and, unlike other nationalities, they have nowhere else to emigrate to in order to avoid endless discrimination and violence (Williams 2001: 447, 454).

## **Conclusion: Differences and Similarities between the Karaite and Crimean Tatar Movements**

200 Williams wrote that, 'while this account is correct in its contention that the ethnonym Tatar was given to the Tatars by their Christian neighbours, the implicit denial of links to the Tatar people of the Golden Horde and the steppe is perhaps an understandable reaction to Soviet attempts to deny the existence of a separate "Crimean" Tatar identity for this people. At the same time, Crimean Tatars are trying now to downplay the effects of Ottoman influence in southern Crimea, because they do not wish to be portrayed as "lackeys" of Russia's traditional enemy, Turkey' (Williams 2001: 37).

As we have seen, the Karaites' theory on their 'ethnogenesis' has its parallels with the Crimean Tatars' theory. Hence, the Crimean Tatar national movement influenced a Karaite national movement in Crimea. Both Crimean Tatars and Karaites believe that they are the indigenous, autochthonous population of Crimea. Both peoples claim pre-Mongol 'roots' in the peninsula. Crimean Tatars trace their ancestry back to the Goths; Karaites back to the Khazars. Additionally, both peoples include a long list of ancestors besides the Goths and Khazars.

In contrast to the Karaites' proto-national movement, the Crimean Tatar movement can be regarded as nationalist based on their demand to consider Crimea as their homeland and claims for an indigenous status (so-called territorial nationalism – see the chapter on theory). The Crimean Tatar movement is a very secular national movement based on a unique, territorialised communal identity.

Crimean Tatars insist on using the ethnonym 'Crimean Tatar' and even question the 'Tatar' component of their ethnonym to emphasise their indigenous status. Crimean Karaites have recently tended to refer to all Eastern European Karaites as Crimean Karaites in order to emphasise their common origin in Crimea (as they believe).

The Crimean Tatars' national trauma following their expulsion from their homeland has served to mobilise and politicise a previously latent national identity. By contrast, the Karaites did not have a historical trauma and hence had a much more passive movement. Another reason is their small number.

## Chapter 8. Final Discussion

### Summary of the Development of Karaite Identity From the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present Day (Constructivist Approach)

The development of a national consciousness among various peoples in Europe took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or even slightly earlier. However, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a Karaite national self-consciousness had not yet been shaped.<sup>201</sup> Karaites still perceived of themselves primarily as adherents of Karaism and called themselves Karaite Jews (in Hebrew *yehudim kara'im*); other peoples also perceived them as such. The conditions for the development of the Karaite national movement were already introduced at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Russian Empire expanded to include the new territories of the Crimea and Poland, both densely populated by Jews (including Karaite Jews) and started adopting anti-Jewish (anti-Rabbinical) laws, which did not differentiate between Karaite and Rabbinic Jews. Hence, Karaites began to highlight their difference from Rabbinic Jews at this point. One Karaite scholar and famous collector, Abraham Firkovich, played an important role in this endeavour. He awakened an interest among the Karaites in their history as well as academic interest in the Karaites (Phase A in Hroch's A-B-C schema). He also stressed the uniqueness of Karaism, its antiquity and independence from Rabbinic Jewish history. In the first stage of the Russian imperial period, Firkovich's theory of the ancient settlement of the Karaites in Crimea played a central role in shaping the newly forming Karaite ethnic identity, one unique and separate from that of Rabbinic Jews. In the second stage of the first period, Russian Turkologists produced a 'Khazar theory' of Karaite origins. According to available sources of this period, many of the Karaite elite still rejected such a notion, although some of them did accept it. Nevertheless, this theory formed the basis for later public and academic conceptions of Karaite ethnic origins and formed a basis for the construction of Karaite ethnic identity. This corresponds with Anthony Smith's ethno-symbolic theory of the importance of the role of myths of common origins and shared historical memories as the defining cultural elements from which ethnic groups emerge.

The establishment of the Karaite Spiritual Consistory in 1837, the official change of their name from 'Jewish Karaites' to 'Russian Karaites' in 1835, and the Karaite congress on national issues in Yevpatoria in Crimea in 1910 are the most important results of the national movement during the first period. Thus, from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until World War II the national self-consciousness of Karaites was so strong that we can distinguish its constitutive elements: belief in a common origin, awareness of their ethnic particularity, a collective proper name and

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<sup>201</sup> Details were presented earlier in Chapter 3 of this study.

relationship to a specific territory (Polish, Lithuanian and Russian Karaites all referring to Crimea as to their motherland).

Here we can see all six main attributes identified by Anthony Smith that distinguish an *ethnic community*:

1. a collective proper name – ‘Russian Karaites’;
2. myth of a common ancestry – ‘Khazar theory’;
3. shared historical memories – ancient settlement of the Karaites in Crimea and migration to Lithuania when Vitold the Great (15<sup>th</sup> century) was ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania;
4. one or more differentiating elements of common culture – religion, language, traditions;
5. an association with a specific ‘homeland’ – Crimea;
6. a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population – a sense of solidarity among Polish, Lithuanian and Crimean Karaite communities.

Hence in this period, the Karaites started to see themselves as ethnic community (in terms defined by Anthony Smith).

In the second phase (1920s–1960s), most Karaite publications originated from the newly formed national states of Poland and Lithuania, while Karaite communities in Crimea and central Russia had been harmed considerably during the Revolution of 1917 and subsequent civil war. During this period, the Polish scholar Jan Grzegorzewski proposed the ‘Kipchak’ (‘Cuman’) theory on the Karaites’ ethnic origin (1924). A few years later, in 1928, the Polish Karaite scholars Zajackowski and Szapszal picked up on the idea and elaborated on it, along with the ‘Khazar theory’. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Karaite community leaders S. Szyszman, M. Sarach and M. Kazas developed it further.

In the Soviet Union, a definition of Karaites as a Turkic people who no longer had a bond with their former Jewish background gained a foothold for political and security reasons.

In the post-Soviet period, the Karaites eagerly adopted the former Turkic theories upon which their identity had initially been built and developed some new concepts. As a result, according to printed sources a Jewish identity is no longer an option. Karaites consider themselves a part of Turkic culture and not Jewish.

The most important conceptual elements of their current identity are the following:

- Under the influence of the Crimean Tatar theory on their ethnogenesis, Crimean Karaites developed a theory that they are descendants of not only the Khazars, but of a long list of Turkic peoples that at some point in time had settled in or passed through the Crimean Peninsula. In contrast, Polish and Lithuanian Karaite authors have not been as influenced by Crimean Tatar theorists. Thus, they are more modest and continue to include only Khazars,

Kipchaks and Cumans in the list of Karaite ancestry, as their predecessors did in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- In the view of current Eastern European Karaite leaders, not all Karaites who profess Karaimism are Karaites by ethnic origin. Thus, in their view followers of Karaimism in Egypt are not Karaites by ethnicity, in contrast to Eastern European Karaites. Moreover, Karaism, in their view, is not a variant of Judaism anymore, but a national religion that they inherited from the Khazars.
- Their national hero is not Abraham Firkovich, as before, but the ‘father of their Turkification’, Seraja Szapszał (Karaites probably search for parallels with Atatürk) and the Lithuanian grand duke Vitolt, who brought some Karaites from Crimea to Trakai in Lithuania.
- Crimean Karaites tend to call all Eastern European Karaites ‘Crimean Karaites’ (imitating the auto-denomination of ‘Crimean Tatars’).
- Owing to the fact that very few Eastern European Karaites profess the Karaite religion or speak the Karaite language and that mixed marriages are quite common, the sense of emotional connection with a broadly recognisable Karaite culture is more important for self-identification as ‘a Karaite’.

Thus, the Karaite case exemplifies the constructivist idea that ethnic (or national) identity is a phenomenon that can be constructed and reconstructed depending on the political and ideological agenda at hand.

### **Construction of Karaite Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity**

In my study, I analysed the development of ethnic identity (re)construction among the Karaites in accordance with Anthony Smith’s theory of ethno-symbolism, especially paying attention to the role of language, religion, culture, appearance, ancestry or regionalism and symbols. I examined these components for every period under study, making use of the most important sources that could be found for the reconstruction of the Karaite identity. As they are mostly printed sources representing the opinions of Karaite elites (with exception of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for which the results of sociological questionnaires are available), the conclusions of the study are based on such elite opinions and not on the opinions of the majority of Karaites. I also paid a special attention to the Karaite studies by non-Karaite writers that played a significant role in the formation of the Karaite identity.

Secondly, in line with Nagel’s argument (see Chapter 2), my study demonstrates that ethnic identity is the result of a dialectical process involving internal and external opinions and processes,

as well as an individual's self-identification and outsiders' ethnic designations (i.e. what *you* think your identity is versus what *they* think your ethnicity is). Thus, ethnic identity may change situationally. According to Nagel, each individual carries a portfolio of ethnic identities that are more or less salient in various situations and vis-a-vis various audiences. Thus, the factors of identity are personal opinion and approval by other members of the community. My study indicates that in the development of national identity, outside opinions may play a major role, as in the Karaite case.

I summarise here the genesis of Karaite ethnic identity from the 19<sup>th</sup> until the 21<sup>st</sup> century (see details in previous parts of the study).

0. The Period Preceding the Russian Imperial Period (before the first Karaite petitions to the Austro-Hungarian and Russian administrations):

There are no sources from this period referring to Karaite ethnicity. Eastearn European Karaites called themselves Karaite Jews (in Hebrew *yehudim karaim*) and *karailar* in the Karaite language. Non-Karaite documents mentioned them either as *Judeans* (in Poland) or *chufut* (in the Crimean Khanate). Karaites did not discuss their ancestry because they considered themselves to be Jews: non-Rabbinical, but still Karaite Jews. Their religion was Karaite Judaism.

They spoke the Karaite language in everyday life and used Hebrew in religious service and for religious literature as well as for business correspondence.

Appearance was different than that of Rabbinic Jews: they wore Turkic clothes and did not have side curls.

1. Russian Imperial Period (end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – 1917):

a. Pre-Firkovich Period (before the 1840s)

We learn about the first Karaite claims on their difference from Rabbinic Jews in their petitions to the Austrian and Russian governments. In the petitions, they emphasised social, religious, linguistic, regional (Turkish lands as motherland) and appearance differences; however, they did not mention anything about ethnicity yet. Travellers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century described them as 'unspoiled by Talmud Jews', with good moral standards. Travel accounts and scholarly articles report that outside observers distinguished between 'positive' Karaite Jews and 'negative' Rabbinic Jews (this was a result of political propaganda in the Austrian and Russian empires). Karaite dress, as opposed to Jewish dress, was similar to that of people in the former Polish lands ('we dress as Poles') and similar to Tatar dress in Crimea. Additionally, non-Karaite observers emphasised the social difference between mainly poorer Rabbanites and the 'honest farmers', or Karaite Jews.

Documents do not discuss ethnicity yet. The Karaites defined themselves in these terms: 'Our community is ancient Jewish' (1795), or 'We are descendants of one ancient Jewish tribe' (1825). In 1835, they rejected the name 'Jews-Karaites' in favour of 'Russian Karaites of Old Testamentary Religion'.



All other characteristics were similar to the previous period.

b. Period of Firkovich's Activity (the 1840s – end of the 1870s):

This period was characterised by the search for legal arguments on the difference between Karaites and Rabbanites. A. Firkovich found *Madjalis* and other documents, which related to the *ancient settlement* of Karaite Jewish ancestors on the Crimean Peninsula (a regional component of identity) and referred to the particular Karaite aspects of Khazar Judaism. The Karaite elite accepted these concepts, and thus a *historical national myth* was created.

In the wake of Firkovich's findings, non-Karaite Russian Turkologists initiated a discussion on the ethnic origin of the Karaites and proposed a theory of the genetic merger of the Khazars and the Karaites' Jewish ancestors, and even speculated on the pure Khazar origin of Karaites. The Karaite Turkic language and appearance corroborated with their hypotheses. In so doing, they even presumed a Turkic anthropological type for the Karaites.

Karaites became interested in the conceptions of their ethnic origin. They revived a specific Karaite national self-consciousness. However, not all Karaite elite supported such notions of their Khazarian ancestry and some continued to adhere to a belief in their Semitic origins.

c. Post-Firkovich Period (the 1870s – 1917):

The Karaite elite continued to be divided between those who accepted notions of their Turkic background (or accepted them partly) and supporters of a traditional Karaite Semitic identity. Non-Karaite scholars writing about the Khazar origin of the Karaites became more confident (e.g. Smirnov). A young Karaite student, Seraja Szapszał, who later became 'a father of Karaite Turkification', published his first work in complete support of the Khazar ancestry of the Karaites.

This also was the period of the first anthropological studies by non-Karaite researchers, which further supported the Turkic identity of the Karaites.

However, many Karaite authors still considered themselves to be Jews.

In terms of religion, a few articles (e.g. in *Novorossiyskie Vedomosti*, 1870, and in *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, 1911–1912) testified to the first voices of the Crimean Karaites proposing a reformation of Judaism, de-judification and secularisation, which can be considered as evidence of the weakening of a purely religious Jewish identity among some Karaites. However, 'religious clerics' were against such reformations. This corresponds to Erik Hobsbawm's concept of the 19<sup>th</sup> century rise of new classes and the resistance of old classes to modernity and latter-day ethno-linguistic nationalisms, which were the successors, or even heirs, to the Eastern European small-nationality movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It also corresponds to Miroslav Hroch's conception that the turn to *national identity grew out of the crisis of identity*, which was brought about by changes at the dawn of the modern era: *the loss of religious legitimacy* and also therefore the loss of

axiomatically formulated principles, *the weakening of the old traditional feudal and patriarchal bonds*, and, from that, the loss of security (Hroch 2007a: 7).

In terms of language, most Karaites did not master Hebrew any longer at this point in time and heard it only in *kenesas* (Karaite synagogues). As Hebrew was a language of religion (a sacred language), the loss of its popularity can also be explained by the weakening of religious legitimacy and of the old traditional feudal and patriarchal bonds. However, the Karaite language became less popular among the Crimean Karaites too, and it was replaced by Russian. On the other hand, it became more popular among Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, for whom the Karaite language became an important symbol of their ethnic identity (though even there it was no longer the native language of most Karaites).

## 2. Polish-Lithuanian Period (*Myśl Karaimska*, 1929–1960):

The use of Hebrew was limited to teaching in the Karaite schools in Lithuania until the 1940s, when Soviet administration prohibited such schools. However, the Karaites did not speak it in everyday contexts.

Karaite and non-Karaite scholars added the Cumans to the list of Karaite ancestors at this point, right alongside the Khazars. Most Karaite authors of *Myśl Karaimska* accepted this concept. Nevertheless, some articles from the Karaite periodical *Myśl Karaimska* testify that the Karaites still had a connection with their Jewish cultural background and traditions. Religion continued to play an important role.

The Karaites still used the Karaite language in Poland and Lithuania. It was a period of active academic study of the language, especially by non-Karaite Turkologists. In this period, Karaite scholars and publicists also stressed that Karaite ethnic links with the Turks and their folklore and a sense of common identity. It was Hroch's **Phase A** (when Karaite activists devoted themselves to ethnic identity making and invited non-Karaite scholars to inquire into the linguistic, historical and cultural attributes of their ethnic group; but in all cases they were far from having any political goals), which gave rise to the second **Phase B** (the period of patriotic/national agitation, where a new range of activists emerged who now began to agitate for their compatriots to join the project of creating a full-fledged nation; linguistic and cultural demands were predominant during Phase B).

## 3. Soviet Period (1917–1989):

Hebrew is no longer in use among the Karaites. In Crimea, Hebrew teaching stopped in 1920, when the Soviet government closed the Karaite schools.

The Karaites at this time had to be cautious in advocating their linguistic, religious, ethnic and cultural background so as not to be accused of 'petty-bourgeois nationalism'. It was particularly dangerous to advocate a Jewish background because of anti-Semitic propaganda in the Soviet

Union. After the deportation of the Crimean Tatars from Crimea, even a Turkic identity was not safe and had to be mentioned carefully. They could not openly practice Judaism either because of the anti-religious Soviet propaganda. The Karaites even forgot the Karaite language; however, it was studied as a part of academic research.

As a result, Karaites in the Soviet Union ‘forgot’ their culture, language and ethnic identity and mostly assimilated with Soviet culture.

#### 4. Post-Soviet Period (1989–present):

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a Karaite national movement began.

Most of the Eastern European Karaites chose a Turkic cultural and ethnic identity over a Jewish one.

The Karaites forgot the Karaite language and hence did not use it as a vernacular language any longer (except for a few families), but there have been attempts to restore it through summer language schools. Besides, religious services in Karaite *kenesas* were carried out in the Karaite language; prayer books were also published in the Karaite language (see details in Chapter 6).

### **Comparative Analysis of National Movements with the Karaite Case According to Miroslav Hroch’s Model. Cultural Form of the Karaite Nationalism According to Smith’s and Hutchinson’s Theories.**

I have focused on Miroslav Hroch’s model for the comparative analysis of national movements and the movements of national minorities in the case of the Karaites because he especially paid attention to small nationalities in Eastern Europe (Hroch 2007: III, 73–81). I will attempt to clarify the place of the Karaite national movement in the European context with the help of this model. The Karaite movement is similar to the type of national movements when an ethnic group has never had either its own statehood or its own ruling class (e.g. the Basques); however, the difference is that the Karaites had never even demanded it. One reason was probably because of their small number. Another reason had to do with historical and political circumstances (see below).

Besides the lack of political demands, the Karaite movement is similar to the movements of other national minorities, which in their turn, according to Hroch, possess characteristics similar to national movements (Hroch 2007: III, 117). The Karaites travelled a long way from a religious group identity to a modern ethnic group identity. The Karaite movement is still lacking certain necessary attributes of a national movement (that is why I define it as a proto-national movement), but in some respects it is analogous to national movements. The following characteristics allow me to categorise it as a national movement. We can distinguish the first two phases, Hroch’s Phase A

and Phase B, in the Karaite case – similar to other national movements. The phase of ‘academic interest’ (*Phase A*) started with the first publications on A. Firkovich findings in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The final end point of Phase A is difficult to define. It continued into the 1920s together with the *korenizatsia* policy in the USSR, and it probably finished with A. Polkanov’s 1942 publication in the Soviet Crimea, then occupied by the Nazis. In Poland and Lithuania, however, Phase A it continued with publications in *Myśl Karaimska* (beginning in 1924) throughout the pre-war period.

The phase of ‘national agitation’ (Phase B) merged with the final stage of Phase A and can be divided into two stages. The first stage began with the appointment of Szapszał to the post of *hakhan* in 1928 and his related activities, including publications in *Myśl Karaimska* as well as active publications by Zajączkowski. However, the end point of the phase is difficult to pinpoint because academic interest continued to some extent in post-war Poland and became reinvigorated after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The second stage of Phase B began in the 1990s with numerous non-academic publications by Crimean and certain Polish and Lithuanian Karaite writers.

The Karaites failed to attain Phase C (the rise of a mass national movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) not only because of their small number, and hence the impossibility of making concrete political demands, but also because of the following political conditions in different periods of time. Though Hroch acknowledges the difference between national movements in Western and Eastern Europe and considers specific historical and political developments of the imperial regimes under which national developments took place, his one-size-fits-all schema pays less attention to the historical context of individual cases than to making generalisations about national developments.

Nevertheless, Hroch points out that the structure of national programmes and their results were not exclusively decided according to the individual wishes and demands of the leading patriots: some objective and specific circumstances have to be taken into account, which can be divided into three groups:

- the political system under which the national movement proceeded during Phase B and Phase C;
- the social structure of the non-dominant ethnic group;
- previous developments: the history of this specific group.

The specific circumstances for the Karaite case were as follows.

First, Hroch stressed a crucial typological difference between Phase B of ‘Western’ national movements under the conditions of a constitutional regime and civil society and Phase B of ‘Eastern’ national movements, which proceeded within the context of late-absolutist feudal regimes in the Habsburg Empire and Russian Empire. He argues that in the multi-ethnic Russian and Habsburg empires, inhabited by many non-ruling ethnic groups, a different type of national movement was dominant. He suggests that the development towards a modern nation in the region

took the form of a national movement, that is, a struggle to achieve the attributes considered necessary for national existence. Lacking not only statehood but also a complete social structure and a tradition of their own culture in their own national language, the national movements of the non-ruling ethnic groups in the multi-ethnic empires pursued the aims of cultural and social emancipation and also, albeit sometimes with a considerable time lag, political emancipation.

Second, we need to consider the political regime and national policy of the regimes where a particular national movement took place.

In the territory of the Habsburg Empire, a repressive policy forbidding all organised forms of social activity and persecuting any expression of political ideas at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century could probably have been one of the factors. It was one of the reasons why the process of attaining national consciousness proceed so slowly in, for example, the Czech case (Hroch 1985: 61)

As for the Russian Empire, Hroch wrote that any political opposition was a priori illegal. In entering the field of politics, politicians aligned with national movements had to take into account that they would face persecution. Many temporarily turned to linguistic and cultural demands in place of certain political aims, especially where an oppressive regime did not allow for political activities: this was the case until the 1850s in Austria and until 1905 in Russia. Thus, the struggle for political participation emerged with the introduction of a constitutional regime: again, this was the case in Austria after 1860 and in Russia in 1905 (as cited in Periwal 1995: 70).

This explains why until the Second World War, both in Austro-Hungary and in Russia, the demand for autonomy remained a central point in the programme of national movements. With the exception of the Magyars (whose national movement successfully achieved a semi-state status), no relevant political group demanded full independence. Even in the case of Poland – after the defeat of the revolutions of 1848 and 1863 – autonomy was the main goal. In Russia, only the Finnish national movement achieved some kind of autonomy, substituting an initial regional autonomy with a national one. Among other national movements, only in Lithuania do we find an isolated voice demanding independence during the revolutionary year of 1905. This was probably one reason why the Karaite movement was stronger in Lithuania than in central and southern parts of the Russian Empire (Periwal 1995: 73).

The Russification policy pursued during the later years of the Russian Empire, accompanied by the acceleration of industrialisation and secularisation of Russian society, inspired among Karaites of the central and southern parts of the empire (as well as among other peoples of the empire) a subjective sense of belonging to Russia, whether through the habit of using the Russian language, its culture and traditions, or through the sense of belonging to a modern society. Crimean-Moscow Karaite authors appealed to community members to abandon the ‘old-fashioned’ Karaite language and religious traditions. On the other hand, the strict policy of Russification at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries provoked the opposite effect – the nationalisation of liberation movements along the national borders of the empire. In this context, it is understandable

why Lithuanian Karaites, living in the environment of the national liberation movements of Lithuania or Poland, had a stronger national identity than Karaites in the central parts of Russia – e.g. Crimean Karaites in Moscow.

Third, during Russia's imperial period Karaites were treated very well in comparison to Rabbinic Jews. This caused a change of their Jewish identity to a Turkic one, but it happened not as a result of threats or pressure. Thus, it would be difficult to predict the nature of future Karaite demands.

Fourth, the Russian revolution of 1917 led to the border being closed between the Soviet Union, Poland and Lithuania. Hence, the bond between the Karaite communities of these countries was broken.

Fifth, the assimilation policy of the Soviet Union led to a significant amount of assimilation by Soviet Karaites. The official activities of religious authorities ceased in the territories of the USSR, Lithuania and Poland. Only in Lithuania did a Karaite priest named S. Firkovich (1897–1982) secretly conduct religious rituals.

Finally, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Karaites divided into at least two groups: adherents of Turkic culture and returnees to the Semitic roots of the people and repatriates to Israel.<sup>202</sup> Though the Karaites failed to attain Phase C – the rise of a mass national movement with political demands – their willingness to obtain an official indigenous status in Crimea in the post-Soviet period can be treated as a political demand or as a demand for self-determination. This demand was not on the agenda in earlier periods, not only because of the above-mentioned political circumstances, but as Hroch stressed, because in general throughout Europe the demand for self-determination, for full independence, emerged at a very late stage in most national movements.

However, as I mentioned in the theoretical part of this study, it is not always a rule that Phase B passes over into Phase C in national movements (Hroch 1985: 22–25). This kind of ethnic identity is often labelled proto-nationalism.

### *Demands*

Hroch distinguishes three groups of demands, corresponding to the three main aspects of national existence:

1. The development or improvement of national culture based on a local language, which had to be used in education, administration and economic life.

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<sup>202</sup>The number of Karaite Jews in Israel is hard to estimate because no census has been conducted. The Karaites say it is forbidden to count Jews, citing a verse from Genesis 32:

'I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude' (Genesis 32, as cited in Kershner 2013).

Generally, the Karaite community in Israel is estimated at 30,000 to 50,000. Most of them came to Israel from Egypt (Kershner 2013). After the breakup of the Soviet Union, an unknown number of Karaites emigrated from there to Israel. Not all of them identify as Karaites, however (Encyclopaedia Judaica 2008).

2. The creation of a complete social structure, including their 'own' educated elites and entrepreneurial classes.
3. The achievement of equal civil rights and of some degree of political self-administration.

In examining the strength of the linguistic and political programme produced during Phase B of different national movements, Hroch distinguishes two types of movements:

- National movements where political demands dominated Phase B;
- National movements dominated by linguistic and cultural demands during Phase B, with political demands following later, during Phase C (which in some cases has never come) (Hroch 2007: II, 69).

This was true of almost all national movements that Hroch examined, except for those belonging to the first type. The Karaite case obviously belongs to the second group – national movement dominated by linguistic and cultural demands (an emphasis on their linguistic, cultural and religious uniqueness and difference from Rabbinic Jews). This allows us to define the Karaite movement as **cultural nationalism**. A classification of the Karaite movement as cultural nationalism can also be confirmed by the application of Hutchinson's three-points theoretical definition of cultural nationalism. First, the importance of historical memory in the formation of Karaites. Second, 'that there are usually competing definitions of the nation, and their competition is resolved by trial and error during interaction with other communities'. Karaites changed their name few times during the studied period. Third, the centrality of cultural symbols to the Karaite group creation, which are only significant because 'of their power to convey an attachment to a specific historical identity'. The definition of the Karaite movement as cultural nationalism is also in line with Anthony Smith's differentiation between cultural and political nationalism (modern nationalism is the later politicisation of cultural or ethnic sentiments) and his 'historical ethno-symbolic' analysis with a special attention to the role of myth, memories and symbols in the formation of nations.

As to linguistic demands, Hroch specifies that even if a significant majority of national movements preferred to make linguistic demands during Phase B, they do not define themselves exclusively in terms of a common language (Hroch 2007: II, 69). Not all Karaite intellectuals (especially not the Crimean intellectuals, but rather Polish-Lithuanian intellectuals) prioritised linguistic arguments and not in all phases of their respective movements, but they did prioritise their uniqueness and distinction as an ethnicity. The demand/goal (social demands) of the Karaite movement was first of all acceptance of their cultural, ethnical and historical difference from the Jewish people. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was a demand to obtain a unique, different status from the Jews, a new social status in the Russian Empire, and related to this a recognition of their ancient settlement in the Crimean Peninsula.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we can even find a few political ideas and proposals in the sources, e.g. an idea by a Karaite named Saduk Raevskiy, editor of *Karaimskaya Zhizn* 1911, to establish particular Karaite national clubs (*natsional'nye kluby*) in order to overcome the Karaites' dissociation from one another, which was one of the main problems of the Karaite community dispersed across a vast territory. Another political proposal idea put forward by an anonymous Karaite author, M.K., in *Karaimskoe Slovo* was to establish a colony in Crimea. In the same periodical, a Karaite named Abkowicz dreamed about establishing a Karaite state, while still realising, nevertheless, the impossibility of such an idea at the time. These two ideas can be considered proto-political demands. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we can hear voices demanding that Karaites obtain an official indigenous status in Crimea (see Chapter 6 of the study) and pan-Crimean ideas in *Karaimskie Vesti* put forward by the Crimean Moscow Karaite Petrov-Dubinskiy that all Eastern European Karaites should be regarded as Crimean Karaites. This can be considered a proper political demand.

However, a comparison of the Karaite movement with other movements is not limited to a listing of similarities and differences. As Hroch wrote, every comparison should, above all, be applicable on an explanatory level (Hroch 1985: 76). In every national movement, the question first arises as to its *causes* (why did the movement start its activities?), and secondly, as to the facts behind its *success* (why was it successful?). This will also be the case here. Hroch compares the results of his comparative investigations of European national movements and asks to what extent these results are applicable to Zionism. (However, he believes that this practice can be understood only as a working hypothesis or an intellectual exercise.) I will attempt to apply his method to the Karaite movement. The first period of the Karaite movement, with its interest in secular history and successful attempts to split from the Jews (petitions, Firkovich's activity, the Spiritual Consistory, their name change) was due to economic and social reasons, that is, to a willingness to detach themselves from Jews in order to obtain a better social status and economic benefits.

Several external factors contributed to the subsequent revival of the Karaite movement: Karaite Jews with their different language and outward appearance drew the attention of scholars, who popularised them in learned societies (hence, I pay a special attention to the Karaite studies in this work). Since then, their language and outward appearance became associated with their ethnic identity and allowed to define their movement as **cultural nationalism**.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Karaite communities were united within a single state, the Russian Empire. This influenced their sense of unity and national feelings. On the other hand, due to the modernisation and industrialisation of Russian society, Karaites moved into cities. Hence, old 'Karaite nests' (e.g. Chufut-Kale) declined and the threat of disintegration of rural communities and diffusion of their members during their search for work across the vast empire stimulated a national consciousness. In the western parts of the Russian Empire, another factor was important as well. In the middle of the 1880s, the Tsarist authorities started a campaign of strict Russification in the



Baltic provinces. This Russification policy came exactly at the time of rapid development of national movements, when national ideas were spreading successfully among many local people. In Lithuania, Russification provoked resistance and the elevating of national feelings; it also prompted the founding of an underground press in the Lithuanian language. This influenced Karaites as well, as can be seen in the periodical *Karaimskoe Slovo*, which referred to the rise of national consciousness and to an understanding of the importance of the national Karaite language. In contrast, the Crimean and Muscovite Karaites living among ethnic Russians were concerned with their ‘non-relevant’ Tatar language in the Russian Empire and with the necessity of the Russification and secularisation policies.

Hroch raises another question concerning causes and concentrates in practical (and chronological) terms on the beginning of national agitation (Phase B). What led to the fact that – independently of each other – intellectuals in so many countries decided to initiate national agitation? (Hroch 1985: 76). Current research views the most important condition as being constituted by a crisis of the old system of values and identities, a crisis which reacted in a variety of ways to the crisis of the old regime and the successes of the process of modernisation (see theoretical part of the study). At that time in Karaite society a question was put on the agenda: how do we integrate the ancient Jewish Karaite identity with a secularised, modern national identity? The crisis of identity in the Karaite case led to the secularisation of young people and their reluctance to observe the Karaite religion or traditions or to learn the Karaite language in Crimea (the attitude towards the native Karaite language was different in the western parts of the Russian Empire).<sup>203</sup> Another common reason for European movements, including the Karaite case, was social mobility (urbanisation, access to higher education) and professional activities. All this called into question the old Karaite identity, which was defined in religious terms, and at the same time stimulated a quest for new identities. In the Karaite case, the Karaite religious identity was replaced consciously or unconsciously with an alternative secular Turkic identity, which was better suited to the new European society than the old religious identity. However, Hroch stresses that the effort to

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203 The absolutist principle of homogenisation sooner or later involved issues of language. Absolutist attitudes were based on the concept of a homogeneous state. Homogenising state policy affected many areas of life on the periphery, and its linguistic aspect was only one of many, and perhaps not the most important. Absolutist, centralist measures provoked opposition and discontent in almost all provinces, but the strength and success of this opposition was not the same everywhere (Hroch 2007: II, 70–73). In the Karaite case, in central and southern centers of Karaite life (Crimea and Moscow) absolutism caused a willingness among some Karaites to get rid of the Tatar dialect of the Karaite language because the ruling state language was the dominant language of communication, as it constituted the language of ‘progress’. In contrast, in Lithuania in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Karaites tended to emphasise a linguistic argument. This may be related to the fact that Russian centralism provoke a strong opposition only in the Baltic provinces.

Assimilation was more effective where the ruling elites did not use ethnic differences as a social barrier. There was no effective assimilation in societies where ethnic groups were strongly marginalised and isolated as an ‘out-group’ by the ruling elite, e.g. in the Baltic states (Hroch 2007: II, 70–73). That is probably why the Karaites assimilated there to a lesser degree (in linguistic sense) than in other parts of the Russian empire. The Russian Empire emerged later than western empires, and thus its attempts at assimilating ethnic groups did too. The assimilating process began there only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

During Phase B, language became a fashionable form of agitation in almost all national movements, and from then on, language became a part of the national message (Hroch 2007: II, 70–73).

diffuse and disseminate a new national identity in no way meant the complete abandonment of earlier identities (Hroch 2007 II: 77). European national movements integrated elements of older ethnic identities as well as a nation-based patriotism (*Landespatritismus*), enlightened regionalism, local identities, and so on (Hroch 2007 II: 77). In a similar vein, the Karaites did not abandon their religious identity completely.

The next complex of questions, according to Hroch's model, concerns the causes and prerequisites for the success of national agitation (Hroch 2007 II: 77–78).

Hroch mentions additional factors for a successful agitation. The first has to do with the successful course of Phase A: successful in so far as it clearly distinguished the nation-to-be from its neighbours, codified the language, provided basic information about the 'national' past, and so forth. The Karaites of the Russian Empire successfully distinguished themselves from a Rabbinic Jewish identity; they spoke a unique language, they proved to have a different religion, culture and customs, myths of descent and historical memories, reinforced by Firkovich's findings.

The second factor was a basic level of vertical social mobility: some educated people must come from the non-dominant ethnic group without being assimilated. Szapszał is a good example of the vertical social mobility of the Karaites. However, according to Hroch social mobility played a rather ambivalent role. The possibility of social advancement (or of access to academic education) corresponded to the advent of Karaite national agitation to the same degree as in other national movements. However, in the case of the Karaites social advancement was also one of the factors accounting for their secularisation.

The third necessary condition was an increasing level of social communication, including literacy, schooling and market relations. Social communication also played a significant role in the Karaite case. As with all other national movements in Central and Eastern Europe, the Karaites were able to use the advantages of clearly intensifying communications (market relationships, literacy, education in schools and universities of the Russian Empire, especially the study of journalism – to wit, Karaite periodicals at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) for the goals of their conscious or unconscious agitation.

The fourth condition was a 'nationally relevant conflict of interests', i.e. social or professional tension or collision, a conflict between new university graduates and a closed elite, a tension between the countryside and towns. We can find references to a conflict of interests in the Karaite community between supporters of traditional religious values and supporters of secularisation in the Karaite periodicals and newspaper articles (see Chapter 4 of this study).

The fifth and final condition had to do with favourable external circumstances (Hroch 2007 II: 77–78). The success of all national movements is more or less dependent on external factors. In the Karaite case, it was the favourable Tsarist politics towards them and positive public opinion

(cultivated from the state administration) about the Karaites in comparison with the Jews, which probably predetermined a better attitude towards the Karaites in the following periods, too.

### Similar and Different Traits of the Karaite Movement and Other National Movements

#### *Similarities:*

- Phase A, 'academic interest', is common to all national movements, including the Karaite movement: an interest in Karaite history, culture and language arose. The same case can be found in, for instance, the Czech national movement in Bohemia: during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a new interest in Czech culture and the Czech language arose based on the patriotic scholarship of the Enlightenment (Hroch 2007 II: 9).

- Most national movements start with the intelligentsia. For instance, an intelligentsia loyal to Polish, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Lithuanian national ideas 'constructed' the histories of their respective nations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and they reconstructed' them in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Snyder 2003: 9). Originally, Lithuanian nationality was professed by the nobility of the territory of the medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Hroch 1985: 86). A sense of Karaite ethnicity, too, was initiated by the Karaite intelligentsia, as we can see from the sources.

- The Karaite language could easily be distinguished from the Yiddish and Slavic languages surrounding it. Like Lithuanian, it was easily distinguished by its impenetrability as a Baltic language (Snyder 2003: 41). Both languages provided the basis for cultural distinctness.

- *National myth*

The Finnish people 'sang themselves into existence' as a distinct national identity through the publication, in 1835, of a collection of folk poems, the *Kalevala*. Seen as the impetus for the revival of Finnish culture, this simple book came to embody Finnishness to the populace. Symbolising an invented culture / an invented national saga, the *Kalevala* served as the basis for popularising a sense of Finnishness (Karner 1991: 152).

To some extent, Firkovich's findings, especially the *Madjalis* document, played a similar role for Karaites as the *Kalevala* for the Finns: providing the impetus and inspiration for a national movement and for the revival of national consciousness. Finnish cultural acceptance was only briefly undermined in the 1880s, as doubts about the *Kalevala*'s authenticity were voiced by anti-Finnish segments of the population (Karner 1991: 154). 'Anti-Karaite' segments of the population, i.e. Jews, voiced doubts about Firkovich's findings as well. Whether Firkovich's findings are authentic or not, they constructed (or revived) the national consciousness of the Karaites. Similarly, the discussion of the *Kalevala*'s authenticity has not stopped (Karner 1991: 154). Despite some

researchers having written that Firkovich's findings were a forgery, discussions of their authenticity have continued to the present day.

The *Kalevala* provided a bridge between the masses and the intellectual community (Kivisto 1984: 55, as cited in Karner 1991: 156). The Karaite periodicals provided a bridge between the masses and the intellectual community.

There were a great number of other invented national myths in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not only the Finnish *Kalevala* and the Karaite *Madjalis* document. Another example is the Scottish myth. Two Scotsmen, James MacPherson and the Rev. John MacPherson, created an indigenous literature for Celtic Scotland and a new history to support it (Trevor-Roper 1983: 16–18). Using Irish ballads found in Scotland, James wrote an epic transferring the storylines from Ireland to Scotland. The MacPhersons then dismissed the originals as 'debased modern compositions'. James supported these claims by writing an 'Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland' (Trevor-Roper 1983: 16–18). Thus, the Scottish Highlanders appeared on the map. The links with Ireland had been cut, and the Scottish Highland acquired an ancient independent culture, albeit one supported by peculiar traditions (Trevor-Roper 1983: 18). Makers of the Highland tradition imagined a past golden age of the Celtic Highlands. In the same way, Firkovich or other interpreters of his *Madjalis* and related documents imagined a golden age dating back to the time of the Khazar Empire. Both MacPhersons and Firkovich declared that they possessed documentary evidence. The MacPhersons created literary ghosts, texts and a history in support of their theories. But in Hugh Trevor-Roper's opinion, they were fantasists rather than the makers of forgeries. They were also genuine in the sense that they lived their own fantasies (Trevor-Roper 1983: 40). Thus, the *Madjalis* document can be considered a literature fantasy and national myth rather than a forgery.

- The student environment was an extraordinarily receptive field for national agitation. Many students quickly adopted the national idea and established connections with the patriotic community. The rapid activation of students was certainly determined by their youth, but the kind of position they occupied in society also played its part: they were relatively more independent of material interests (though this does not signify that they were not subject to ideological control), they had greater freedom to dispose of their own time and they lived under conditions of intensive reciprocal contact. Universities were the places where members of the ruling nation gained a national consciousness – think of German students in Prague, the Swedes in Helsinki, the Poles at Russian universities (Hroch 1985: 149) and of Seraja Szapszał, who received his education at St. Petersburg University.

#### *Differences:*

- The very small number of individuals in the Karaite community.

- In contrast to other national movements, although the Karaite movement started inside of the community (petitions, Firkovich's activity) in Phase A it was developed to a great extent by outsiders (theories on the Khazar origin of the Karaites were proposed by Russian Turkologists, anthropological research was done by non-Karaites). Karaite elite accepted the theories later.

- There were no obstacles to (besides taxation laws by the Russian imperial administration) or oppression of the Karaite movement (in contrast to the Czech, Ukrainian or Lithuanian cases) before the Revolution of 1917, though there was the threat of dispersal of the Karaites and of a dissolution of the Karaite communities in the vast territory of the Russian Empire in the era of industrialisation. During the Soviet period, there was the threat of assimilation and of links being cut between Karaite communities in the USSR, Lithuania and Poland. Currently, there are ideological disagreements between supporters of a Turkic Karaite identity and returnees to Karaite Judaism and advocates of a Semitic background.

- The first phase of the Karaite movement took place in the Russian Empire (preconditions for the movement can be traced back to the Habsburg Empire), where national movements differed from Western and East-Central Europe. As Hroch points out, until the Second World War demands for full independence were rare both in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Russian Empire. Demands for cultural, social or regional autonomy remained central in the programme of national movements. In this political context, the lack of political demands of the Karaite movement was not so unusual.

Hroch's A-B-C schema is an effective framework for analysing national movements in Eastern Europe in general, though it leaves less room for discussion of the distinctive features of individual cases of national developments and the historical / political circumstances under which such developments took place.

In summary, the main factors that distinguished the Karaites from typical national groups and prevented them from reaching Phase C in their national movement were their small number, the ambiguous nature of their religion, uncertainty over their ethnic origin and their dispersal across a vast territory divided by different countries.

Despite these differences, the Karaite movement can be put on the same level with other European national movements analysed by Hroch and other scholars of nationalism. To be exact, analysis of the Eastern European Karaite movement confirms its character as a movement that achieved success in defining the Karaites as a certain ethnic group (according to all six main attributes of an ethnic community defined by Anthony Smith). However, the Karaites cannot be defined as a modern nation because they lack a clearly delimited territory or 'homeland', a public

culture, economic unity and legal rights and duties for everyone, which, according to Smith, make nations ultimately quite different from *ethnies*, despite the fact that both possess such features as an identifying name, myths of common origins and shared historical memories. Despite the fact that some scholars, for instance Armstrong, may use the terminology of 'nation' for pre-modern *ethnies*, they clearly differentiate modern nations from these earlier ethnic identities. Smith and Hutchinson reserve the term 'nation' for the modern period and they clearly separate a modern nationalism from pre-modern ethnic sentiment.

The roots of the Karaite movement are linked to the crisis of older identities and ties. Its vision was not political, and its demands were cultural and social and, at most, proto-political; consequently, it can be called an (ethno)cultural nationalism, or a proto-national movement with emphasis on cultural aspects. However, the Karaite agitation for a shared national identity was successful, especially if we consider the number of Karaite publications on their ethno-Turkic identity in contrast to a Karaite-Jewish religious identity. Currently, a shared Turkic identity has won out over other alternative identities, including a Semitic cultural-religious identity, and over assimilation with other surrounding nations.

## Appendix A

### KARAITE PERIODICALS

The first Karaite media appeared in Eastern Europe in the form of manuscripts, similar to the periodical *Davul* [Drum] from Odessa, published between 1864 and 1872, or the humorous newspaper publication *Zurna-Davul* in Feodosia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first printed Karaite journal, *Karaimskaya Zhizn*, was published in 1911–1912.

***Karaimskaya Zhizn* (Караимская жизнь) [Karaite Life]. Moscow, 1911–1912**



(<http://goo.gl/w1EFMj>)

*Karaimskaya Zhizn* was the first printed Karaite periodical in Eastern Europe. Twelve issues were published in Moscow in the years 1911–1912. The issues were published in Russian. The chief editor of the periodical was Saduk Raetskiy and the main publisher-journalist was V.I. Sinani. The journal mainly focused on the life of the Crimean Karaite community, its national, religious and cultural issues. However, it also published news from the Egyptian Karaite community. The journal contained a scholarly discussion on the Karaites' past and on current issues as well as the biographies of outstanding Karaite figures, poems and short stories. Karaite and Russian researchers and journalists were invited to collaborate with the journal (see Chapter 4 of this study and Yablonovska 2013).

Not all Karaites supported the idea of publishing a national periodical. Some of them were afraid to publicly reveal internal issues about the Karaite community (see Chapter 4 of this study and Yablonovska).

The main tasks of the periodical was as follows: to collect scarce information about the Karaites; to learn about their historical past, because Karaites knew so little about themselves; to introduce the Karaites to a wider audience; and to unite Karaite communities (see Chapter 4 of this study and Yablonovska 2013).

The monthly journal was only published for one year, a total of 12 issues. However, the next Karaite periodical, *Karaimskoe Slovo*, continued the national tasks initiated by *Karaimskaya Zhizn*.

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***Karaimskoe Slovo* (Караимское слово) [Karaite Word]. Wilno, 1913–1914**





(<http://goo.gl/aIJ9Xh>)

The monthly periodical *Karaimskoe Slovo* continued the tasks initiated by *Karaimskaya Zhizn*. It was published in Wilno (which was a part of the Russian Empire at the time) in the years 1913–1914, and was produced in Russian. It was a communal journal on the history and literature of the Karaites living in the western provinces of the Russian Empire (mostly in Wilno and Troki). The chief-editor was A. Spakowski and the editor Owadia Pilecki. The periodical was intended for all Karaites living in the Russian Empire.

*Karaimskoe Slovo* was saturated with the ideas of nationalism and national revival. The first issue spoke of ‘developing the national consciousness’ of the Karaites and increasing their national spirit. The editorial board also called upon the Karaite intelligentsia to prevent Karaite persons from away from Karaite beliefs and practices and to encourage a revival of the Karaite nation; to unite people for this purpose.

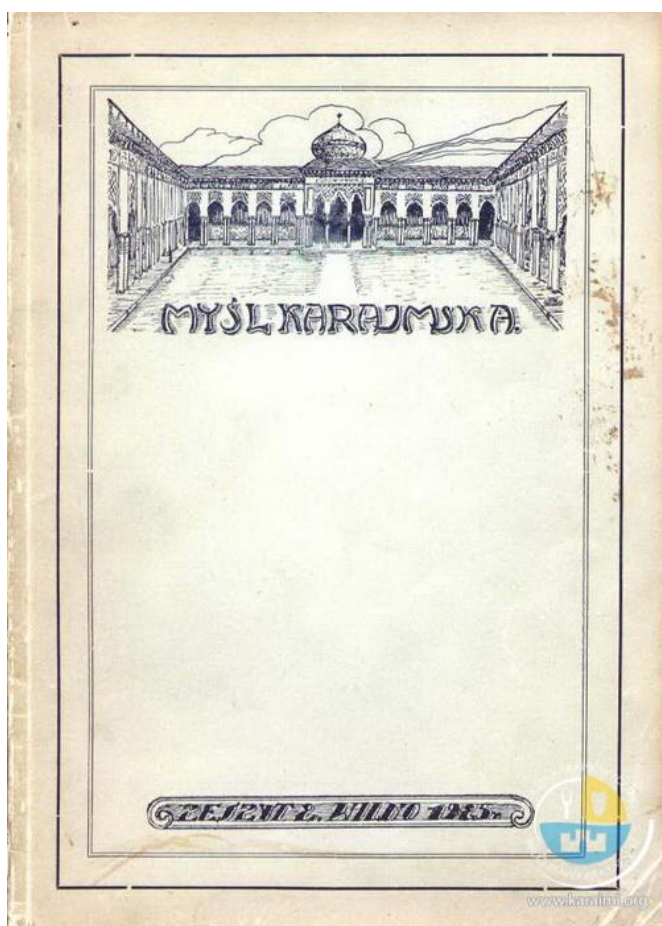
Important contributing authors included Tobiasz Lewi-Babowicz, Abraham Szyszman, Mojżesz Pilecki, Aron Katyk, Ksenia Abkowicz, Feliks Malecki, Borys Kokenaj and Mojżesz Firkowicz. However, many articles were written anonymously.

The editorial board published six issues in 1913 and three double issues in 1914 – altogether 12 issues. Unfortunately, World War I had interrupted the publication of the journal.

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### Myśl Karaimska [Karait Thought]. Wilno, 1924–1939; Wrocław, 1945–1947



Title page of the second issue of *Myśl Karaimska* (Wilno, 1925) (source: <http://www.karaimi.org/pl/o-nas/literatura/czasopisma>).

*Myśl Karaimska* [Karait Thought] is one of the main Karaite periodicals (along with *Karaimskaya Zhizn*), a journal written in Polish, which was published in Wilna between 1924 and 1939 (10 issues) and in Wrocław between 1945 and 1947 (two issues). The editor of the first issues (1924–1929) was Ananiasz Rojecki, followed by A. Zajączkowski (1931–1947). Other editors and authors of the journals included Karaite and Polish Turkologists, historians and other scholars: T. Kowalski, S. Szapszal, M. Morelowski, Józef Wierzynski and T. Levi-Babovich.

The journal's main goal was to help preserve Karaite culture and language and to present the Karaite heritage to the world, to serve as 'a Karaite calling card to the world', as T. Kowalski put it (see Chapter 5 of this study). Although most articles in the journal were published in Polish, poems and short stories were published in the Karaite language. *Myśl Karaimska* had a high academic standard. However, as M. Kizilov noticed, the standard was at times compromised by references to non-existent sources (Kizilov 2007).

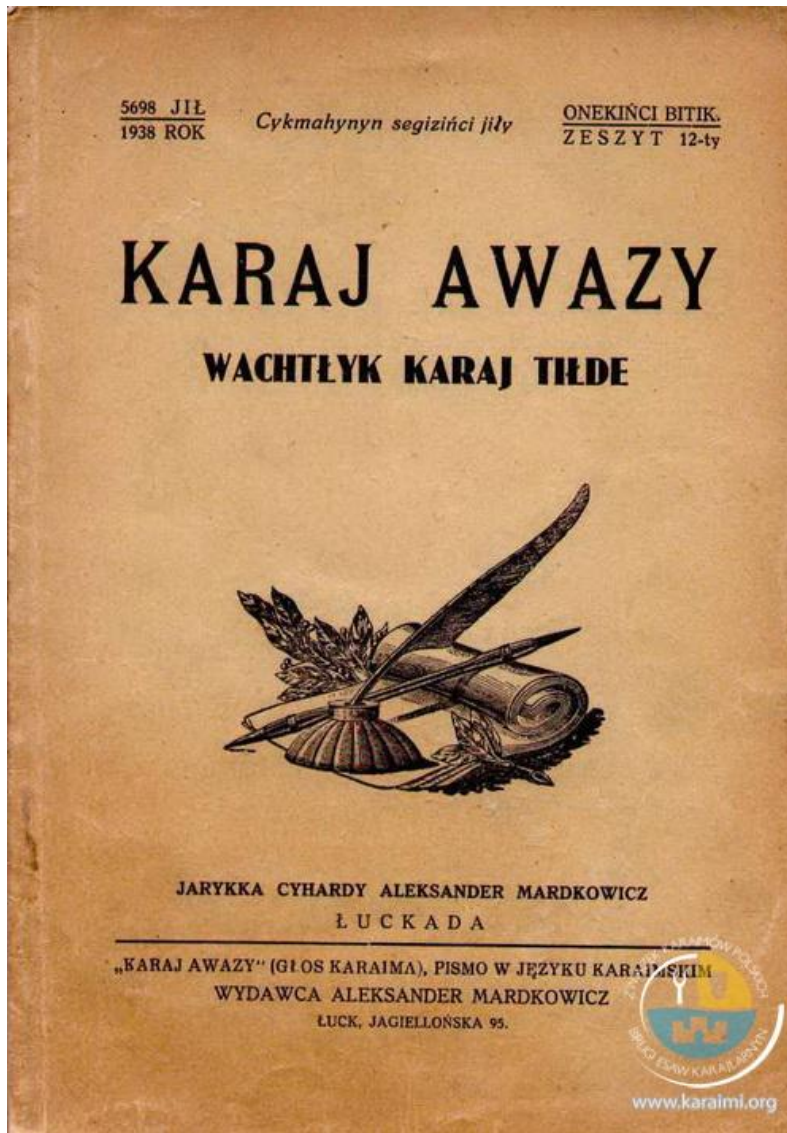
The outbreak of World War II interrupted the publication of the periodical in Wilno. After the end of the war, the Karaite community re-established its publication in Wrocław in 1945. However, it became more academic and drier, and most authors were non-Karaites. In 1948, A. Zajączkowski changed the name of the periodical to *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* to make it more academic. Some Karaite scholars from Oriental Studies continued to publish in it. The periodical still exists under this name today (Kizilov 2007).

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***Karaj Awazy* [Karaite Voice]. Luck, 1931–1938**



(Source: <http://www.karaimi.org/pl/o-nas/literatura/czasopisma>).

*Karaj Awazy* was the only periodical published in the Karaite language (in its Galician-Volhynian dialect) during this period. A Karaite named Alexander Mardkowicz initiated its publication in Luck (which was a part of Poland at the time) in 1931, and published a total of 12

issues before stopping publication in 1938. Its authors were Karaites, who published articles about life in Luck and about Crimean and Egyptian Karaite communities as well as historical articles, poems and short stories. The issues are difficult to find in the national libraries of Eastern Europe, but at one time every Karaite family owned copies and it served as a textbook of the Karaite language (Kizilov 2007).

*Karaj Awazy* ceased publication with the beginning of WWII. It did not begin publishing after the war because of the death of its chief editor, Mardkowicz, as well as because of the annexation of Luck by the Soviet Union in 1944–1945 and the emigration of Luck's Karaite community. Only at the end of the 1980s did a new publication called *Awazymyz* [Our Voice] seek to continue Mardkowicz's endeavour in Poland.

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### *Awazymyz* [Our Voice]





(<http://www.awazymyz.karaimi.org>)

The cultural-historical periodical *Awazymyz* [Our voice] has been publishing under this name since 1989. Previously, it had been published under the name *COŚ* [Something] from 1979 onwards. A group of young Karaites initiated its publication. In 1999, *Związek Karaimów Polskich* [the Association of Polish Karaaims] took over its publication. In 1999–2003, only an electronical version of the periodical was published at [www.awazymyz.karaimi.org](http://www.awazymyz.karaimi.org) and distributed among the Karaite communities of Poland and Lithuania. Since 2004, it has been published in both printed and electronic versions. The periodical has gradually increased the frequency of its publications:

2004-2005 – 2 issues per year,  
2006-2007 – 3 issues per year,  
2008-2010 – 3 Polish issues and one in Russian,  
2011 – quarterly,  
2012 – quarterly.

**Source:**

<http://www.awazymyz.karaimi.org/>

***Nash Golos (Наш голос) [Our Voice] 4/2008***  
**a Russian-language appendix to *Awazymyz***



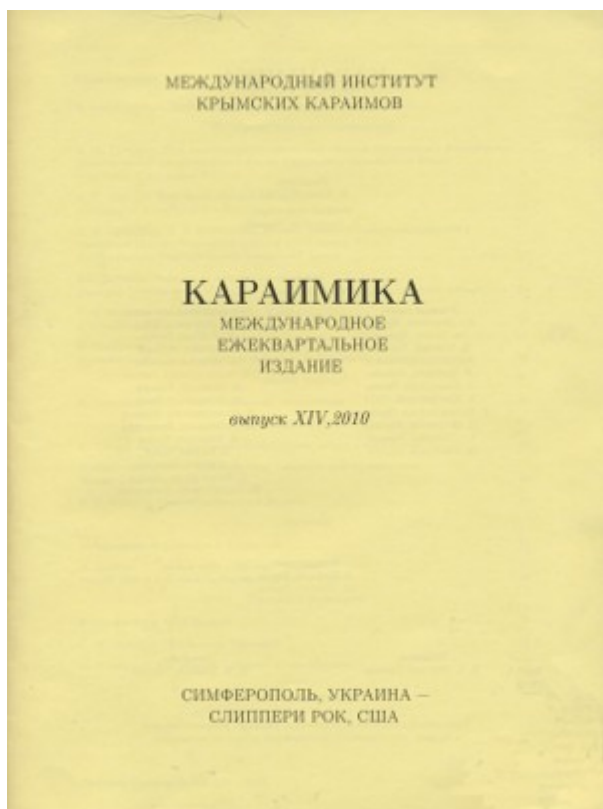
(<http://www.awazymyz.karaimi.org>)

*Nash Golos* [Our Voice] has aimed to serve as a Russian-language counterpart to the Polish periodical *Awazymyz*. It was published with the goal of disseminating important current information for Russian-speaking Karaites. The idea to publish *Nash Golos* resulted from one of the Karaite

language summer schools in Trakai. Hence, the picture of a street in Trakai on the front page of the periodical.

Source: <http://www.awazymyz.karaimi.org/ru/21-ru/item/267-pochemu>

***Caraimica* (Караимика), USA – Simferopol, Ukraine, 2007–2011**



(Source: <http://turkolog.narod.ru/bs/B1326-0.htm>)

*Caraimica* is a Karaite international quarterly periodical. It has been published by the International Institute of Crimean Karaites (USA) since 2007 (the last volume of the journal was issued in 2011<sup>204</sup>). The periodical is mainly in Russian with short summaries in English as well as some articles in English. The chief-editor is V.I. Kefeli (USA), the publisher is V. Mireyev (Ukraine) and the editorial board consists of V. Penbeck (USA), B. Taimaz (Russia), D. Penbeck (France), A. Kefeli (Israel), V. Lebedev (Ukraine), I. Raknimbaev (Kazakhstan) and Ya. Tanatar (Turkey).

The aim of the journal was to follow the tradition of the preceding Karaite periodicals of trying to preserve the cultural values of the Crimean Karaites and the collection of scientific

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<sup>204</sup>According to an online store for Karaite books: <http://turkolog.narod.ru/bs/N4-1.htm> (accessed 26.02.13).

information about the Crimean Karaites and to connect the Crimean Karaites with other Karaite communities worldwide (mainly, the Lutsk-Galich and Troki communities).

The periodical was dedicated to writing about the history, religion, literature and culture of the Karaites. In addition, the editors published the biographies of prominent Karaites who had 'contributed to the development and revival of a small, but proud people'.

Special attention was paid to the material forms of the Karaite language: plays, poetry, stories and essays in the Crimean, Galich and Troki dialects of the Karaite language.

*Caraimica* positioned itself as an unbiased scientific journal (*Caraimica* is also a name for the science that studies the Karaites) and invited authors to put forward polemics and stimulate discussion regarding contradictory viewpoints on Karaite issues.

#### **Sources:**

*Caraimica* (Караимика). Slippery-Rock, USA - Simferopol, Ukraine, 2007-2011.

#### ***Karaimskie Vesti* (Караимские вести, Къарай хабэрлер) [Karaite News]. Moscow, 1994–2003, 2007–present**

*Karaimskie Vesti* is a monthly newspaper published by a non-governmental organisation of Moscow Karaims with a Crimean origin. The organisation has existed since 1989 under different names. Currently, it is a regional non-governmental organisation called the National-Cultural Autonomy of Moscow Karaites (the name was registered 01.10.2012). From 1994 until 2003, the organisation received funding from the donations of Mikhail Sarach,<sup>205</sup> allowing it to publish seventy issues of the two-page newspaper *Karaimskie Vesti* in the A3 format. The publication was interrupted because of the death of Mikhail Sarach in 2002.

The newspaper's editors published literature essays by Karaites, historical sketches, memoirs and chronicles of current Karaite events. The number of copies published was not numerous and the newspaper was distributed by Karaite activists locally.

The editor and organiser of the newspaper was Ksenia Mangubi, its founder was Mikhail Sarach, the chief editor was V.I. Kefeli, his deputy was M.N. Kazas and the executive secretary was K.M. Mangubi. The editorial board consisted of I.S. Simanchuk, S.N. Firkovich and B.S. Taymaz. The editorial council consisted of S.N. Babajan, N.A. Baskakov, K.M. Musaev, S.Ya. Shamash and A.I. Bakkal.

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<sup>205</sup>See the appendix 'Biographies'.



The publication was resumed in 2007 as a national bulletin and in electronic form, in A4 format, which is distributed through the Internet and can be accessed at the following address: <https://sites.google.com/site/karaimskiesti/> (accessed: 26.02.13).

The chief editor was Oleg Vasilievich Petrov-Duninski. Between 2007 and 2012, 106 issues were published. As of today, it has been published longer than any other Karaite periodical.

**Source:**

Karaimskie Vesti (Караимские вести, Къарай хабэрлер). Moscow, 1994-2003, [Online] since 2007 <<https://sites.google.com/site/karaimskiesti/>>, accessed 26 February 2013.



(Source of the image: <http://karai.crimea.ua/>).

A newspaper called *Qirim Karailar (Кърым Къарайлар)* was first published in March 2005. The newspaper reproduced archival documents and articles from old Karaite publications and periodicals and also published articles by current authors.

**Sources:**

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## Appendix B

### BIOGRAPHIES of Scholars who Studied the Karaites

#### Russian Scholars

**Bashmakov (Bashmakoff), Aleksandr Aleksandrovich [Башмаков, Александр Александрович] (1858–1943)**



(Image Source: [Russkaya Liniya](#))

Aleksandr Bashmakov was a Russian writer, ethnographer, lawyer and anthropologist. He was the offspring of General A.V. Suvorov from his mother's side. Aleksandr Bashmakov was born in Odessa (Russian Empire). He completed legal studies at Odessa University. From 1881 to 1882, Bashmakov worked as a secretary of law for the Commission of the Rumelian Administration in Eastern Rumelia. He then served as the director of regional libraries and a local museum. Later, when he returned to Russia, he worked in the international legal system between 1882 and 1885. He also participated in the legal reform of the Baltic region during this period. In 1898, he started work within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1904 and 1905, he was an editor of the *Journal de St.-Petersbourg*, and between 1905 and 1906 he edited the newspaper *Narodnyy Golos* [People's Voice]; simultaneously, he was the editor in chief of *Pravitel'stvennyy Vestnik* [Governmental bulletin] (*Istoricheskaya Encyclopedia* 2008).

One of his hobbies was ethnography: he studied Altay, the Balkans, Sudan and many European countries (*Istoricheskaya Encyclopedia* 2008).

As for his political views, Bashmakov supported monarchic nationalism and Pan-Slavism. He established the anti-revolutionary party *Russskaya Partiya Narodnogo Tsentra* [Russian Party of the National Center]. After the revolution of 1917, he was the assistant of a chief authorised officer at the Red Cross. In 1919, Bashmakov immigrated to Turkey, then to Serbia, and in 1924 to France (*Istoricheskaya Encyclopedia* 2008, *Bolshaya Encyclopedia Russkogo Naroda*).

During this time, Bashmakov published scholarly articles, including a few articles about Karaites. In France, he taught at the School of Anthropology and worked at the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres and in the library of the Institute of Human Paleontology (*Istoricheskaya Encyclopedia* 2008).

### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

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- [\*Istoricheskaya encyclopeadia 1900–1917\*](#) 2008.
- Graf 2004.
- *Ne zabytye Mogily* 1999.
- Smolin 2005.
- Tomsinov 2007: 166-204.

### **Grigoriev, Vasily Vasilievich [Григорьев, Василий Васильевич] (1816–1881)**



(Image Source: [Rulex](#))

The Russian historian-orientalist Vasily Vasilievich Grigoriev graduated from the Philology Faculty of Oriental Languages at the University of St. Petersburg. He began publishing articles as a student (his first article was ‘History of the Mongols’, 1834). A personal conflict prevented him

from becoming a professor at the University of St. Petersburg. In 1838, he became a professor of Oriental Languages at Rishelie Lyceum in Odessa instead (Brokgauz & Efrona 1890–1907).

Grigoriev published articles in *Proceedings of the Odessa Society* [Записки одесского общества], in the *Odessa Almanakh* [Одесский альманах] and in *Novorossiyskiy Calendar* [Новороссийский календарь] (Brokgauz & Efrona 1890–1907).

In 1844, he moved back to St. Petersburg and started to work at the Department of Religious Affairs (Brokgauz & Efrona 1890–1907).

He also helped N.I. Nadezhdin (see below) to edit the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* [Журнал Министерства Внутренний Дел] and published various articles within the journal. He is allegedly the author of the anonymously published article ‘Evrei-Karaimy’ (see Chapter 3 of this study). Simultaneously, he often worked with various geographical and archaeological societies (Brokgauz & Efrona 1890–1907).

Grigoriev, along with V.V. Deriker, purchased the journal *Finnish Bulletin* and renamed it the *Northern Review*, but it was discontinued soon thereafter.

In 1851, Grigoriev settled in the Orenburg region and started working as the head of the borderline expedition, dealing with Khans and Kirgizs (Brokgauz & Efrona 1890–1907).

From 1863 to 1880, he worked at the Department of History of the East. In 1869–1870, he was editor in chief of the *Government Bulletin* [Правительственный вестник]. In 1874, he was head of the Main Administration of Printing (Главное управление по делам печати). Simultaneously, he organised the Third Congress of Orientalists (which was held in St. Petersburg in 1876). Grigoriev published for the Congress a collection of his first articles entitled *Russia and Asia* (Brokgauz & Efrona 1890–1907), one of which was dedicated to the Jewish sects in Russia, including the Karaites.

As a scholar, he contributed a great deal to the field of Orientology in Russia (Brokgauz & Efrona 1890–1907).

#### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

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#### **Kondaraki, Vasily Christoforovich [Кондараки, Василий Христофорович] (1834–1886)**

The Russian historian and ethnographer of Crimea, Vasily Kondaraki, was born in Simferopol. Although he did not have the funds to attend university, he was talented, self-educated and multilingual. His educational interests revolved around the history of Crimea. According to A.A. Nepomnyashchii, Kondaraki was only 20 years old when he published his first article, entitled

‘A Fragment From a Letter From Simferopol’, signed by the pen name V.K., in a newspaper called *Severnaya Pchela* [A Northern Bee] (30 June 1854) (*K Biografii* 1996).

As an interpreter in Feodosia’s Quarantine Administration, Kondaraki started to publish actively in many newspapers throughout Russia. From 1858 onwards, he was the commissar of Yalta’s Quarantine Outpost. Due to his position, he permanently lived in Yalta, while continuing to be published in the newspapers of Odessa, Nikolaev and Sevastopol (*K Biografii* 1996).

On two occasions, when Tsar Aleksandr’s II family visited southern Crimea in 1861 and 1863, Kondaraki was their guide. He was awarded twice with a diamond ring for his interesting stories. He received a third ring from the empress for his first monograph, *A Detailed Description of the Southern Shore of Crimea* (Kondaraki V.Kh.: *Ekskursovod Ventsenosnyh Osob – Sem’i Tzarya Aleksandra II* 2012).

Kondaraki was the author of more than 20 books and more than 70 articles about Crimea, its history, nature and population. His most important works include *Universal’noe Opisanie Kryma* [Universal Description of Crimea], in 4 volumes, and *V Pamyat’ Stoletiya Kryma* [In Memory of the 100-Year Anniversary of Crimea], in 10 volumes (1883) (*K Biografii* 1996). Both works included articles on the Karaites (see Chapter 3).

#### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- V.Ch. Kondaraki – Istorik Kryma 1990.
- Nilkolaenko 2009 and 2010
- Kondaraki 2012.

**Nadezhdin, Nikolay Ivanovich [Надеждин, Николай Иванович] (1804–1856)**



(Image Source: [Rulex](#))

Nicolay Nadezhdin was a Russian literary critic, ethnographer and linguist. He was born in the Ryazan region to the family of a priest. He completed studies at both Ryazan Theological Seminary and Moscow Theological Academy. From 1824 to 1826, he was a professor of literature, German and Latin languages at Ryazan Seminary. In 1826, he left the seminary and started to work as a private teacher in Moscow. After 1828, he published some poems and articles in the *Bulletin of Europe*. He became known by the pseudonym *Nedoumka* (or ex-student *Nikodim Nedoumka*) after his first critical article in the Bulletin (1828). From 1828 to 1830, he continued publishing critical articles. In 1829, he was selected as a member of the Society of Russian History and Antiquities (*Obshchestvo Istorii i Drevnostey Rossiyskikh*). In 1830, he defended a dissertation (having not completed a Magister degree) with the title 'About Origin, Character and Fortunes of Poetry'. In 1831–1835, he was a professor at Moscow University. In 1836, his journal *Teleskop* was closed because of the critical article 'Philosophical Letters' by P.Ya. Both Chaadaev and Nadezhdin were exiled to Ust-Sysolsk (Vologodskiy region), then to Vologda (he was granted a pardon in 1838). Consequently, his career in literature was finished (Brokgauz & Efron 1890–1907).

At the end of the 1830s, he started active scientific research in theology, aesthetics, ethnography, geography, history and folklore. He published approximately 100 articles for the *Encyclopaedic Lexicon* by A. Plyushar. Nadezhdin initiated new methods for the study of the folklore of peoples of Russia and laid the foundation for domestic historical geography. He was the author of several important works in ethnography (e.g. *About Ethnographical Study of the Russian People* (1847). In 1848, Nadezhdin became a chairman of the Ethnographical Department of the Russian Geographical Society (Brokgauz & Efron 1890-1907).

N.I. Nadezhdin was also an editor of *Odessa Miscellany* (*Odesskiy Almanakh*) (1839–1840), of *Geographical News* (*Geograficheskie Izvestiya*) (1848) and of the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* (*Zhurnal Ministerstva Vnutrennih Del*) (1842–1856) (Brokgauz & Efron 1890–1907), where he presumably published an article on the Karaites (see Chapter 3).

### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Nadezhdin Nikolay Ivanovich. In: Brokgauz & Efron 1890-1907.
- Yu.V. Mann 1962.
- Kamenskiy 1984.
- Sapov 1995.

**Smirnov, Vasiliy Dmitrievich [Василий Дмитриевич Смирнов] (1846–1922)**



(Image Source: [Istoriya Biblioteki](#))

Vasiliy Smirnov was a Russian Orientalist and specialist in the history and literature of Turkey.

He was the son of a church deacon, who passed away when Vasiliy was only eight years old. He completed his religious studies at a school in Astrakhan and a theological seminary in Perm. In 1865, he entered the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg; however, he changed to the Faculty of Oriental Languages at the University of St. Petersburg and graduated in 1870 ([Smirnov Vasiliy Dmitrievich](#) 1995).

Smirnov became a docent in 1874, and then advanced to the position of professor of Oriental languages at the University of St. Petersburg in 1884. He was the first in the field of Oriental Studies to study the history, culture and literature of Turkey. His academic works established the independent branch of Turkology studies within the field of Russian Turkology. He also dedicated a great deal of his time to Crimean studies, where he turned his attention to the Karaites ([Smirnov Vasiliy Dmitrievich](#) 1995).

Smirnov's works sometimes takes a negative attitude towards Turkey as well as towards demonstrations of nationalism and chauvinism. This was the result of conflicts with Turkey and the influence of the official environment and negative attitudes towards Muslim culture in general ([Smirnov Vasiliy Dmitrievich](#) 1995).

**Sources and further reading:**

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**Chwolson, Daniel Abramovich [Хвольсон Даниил Абрамович] (1819–1911)**



(Image Source: [Wikipedia](#))

Daniel Chwolson was a Russian-Jewish Orientalist. He was born in Wilna (when it was a part of the Russian Empire) to an underprivileged Jewish family. Young Daniel successfully completed Jewish *yeshiva*, with excellent knowledge of Hebrew and the Talmud. Chwolson spoke primarily Hebrew up until the age of 18, when he taught himself German, Russian and French in only three years. He was exceptionally passionate about education. At the age of 22, he travelled by foot to Breslau, where after three years of preparation in the classical languages, he entered Breslau University in 1844. He studied Oriental languages with a focus on Arabic and completed his studies at Breslau University in 1848. In 1850, he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from Leipzig University (Chwolson 1906; Reznik 1999).

Later he returned to St. Petersburg, where he won recognition within academic circles. He converted to Christianity and was appointed an extraordinary professor of Oriental languages at the University of St. Petersburg in 1855. Three years later, he received a similar appointment in *Dukhovnaya Akademiya*. In Jewish circles, converts were perceived negatively. This was no exception for Chwolson, who was viewed unfavourably by his Jewish counterparts for having allegedly converted to Christianity to obtain a professorship chair at the university.



However, it is possible that he sincerely came to believe in the divine origin of Christ, as we can see in his research *Poslednyaya Vecherya Iisusa Christa i Den' Ego Smerti* [The Last Lord's Supper and the Day of His Death], which is written in a spirit of admiration for Christ (the study is the first work to show non-participation of the Jewish people in the crucifix). (Reznik 1999)

To his credit, Chwolson never criticised the Jews, but, on the contrary, wrote a number of works in their defence. He was possibly the only Christian in Russia who was an expert in Jewish languages and religious rituals and could read Jewish texts in their original language (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

In 1856, Chwolson's first work entitled *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, in two volumes, was published by the Imperial Academy at its own expense. The work, a contribution to the history of religion, at once established the authority of its author in the field of Oriental research. Three years later, Chwolson published another important work, *Ueber die Ueberreste der Altbabylonischen Literatur in Arabischen Uebersetzungen* (St. Petersburg, 1859; also in Russian under the title *Novootkrytie Pamyatniki* [New monuments] in *Russki Vestnik* 1859). The importance of his discoveries as well as his interesting theories on the old Babylonian monuments made the work popular among scholars (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

After Chwolson had firmly established his reputation, he devoted himself to the defense of his former coreligionists. His focus was on criticising anti-Semitism and blood accusations; he published a number of articles and works on the topic (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

Chwolson also defended Karaite monuments from accusations of their having been falsified by Abraham Firkovich (See *Achtzehn Hebräische Grabschriften aus der Krim* in the *Mémoires* of the St. Petersburg Academy of Science, 1865 (Russian translation: *Vosemnadtsat Nadgrobykh Nadpisei iz Kryma*, St. Petersburg, 1866) (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

Chwolson was an inexhaustible collector of Hebrew texts. His collection is one of the most valuable in the world. He published a catalogue of his Hebrew books, called *Reshimat Sifre Yisrael*, in Wilna in 1897. Afterwards, the Russian government granted Chwolson the title of Councillor of the State [*Wirklicher Staatsrath*] (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

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- Reznik, Semen 23 November, 1999. Krovavyy Navet v Rossii. Istoriko-Dokumental'nye Ocherki. D.A. Khvolson [Blood Libel in Russia. Historic Documentary Outlines. D.A. Khvolson]. In: *Vestnik* 24 (231). [Online]. Available at <http://www.vestnik.com/issues/1999/1123/koi/reznik.htm> (Accessed: 02.07.2017)

**Polkanov, Aleksandr Ivanovich Полканов [Александр Иванович] (1884–1971)**

Aleksander Polkanov was a Crimean historian, ethnographer and archaeologist who worked as a curator for a few museums in Crimea. He was born in Crimea (Feodosian uezd) in 1884. He was credited with saving numerous valuable museum artifacts by hiding them in secret locations during World War II. He wrote a brochure called *Crimean Karaites*, as it was requested by the occupational German authorities, in which he argued that the Crimean Karaites are Turks. Thus, he helped save them from annihilation. After the war, he was viewed as a ‘collaborator’ and punished by the Soviets. He was rehabilitated in 1956 and continued to supervise museums (Polkanov, Aleksandr Ivanovich).

**Polyakov, Vladimir Evgenevich [Поляков, Владимир Евгеньевич] (1946, Bucharest)**



(Image Source: [Librusek](#))

Vladimir Polyakov was born on 6 May 1946, into a military family in Bucharest. In 1957, the family moved back to their native Simferopol. Polyakov graduated from secondary school and technical college in Simferopol. Later, he graduated from Kiev’s National Research Institute for Road Transport and went on to complete post-graduate studies in Tactics at Vernandskiy National University. He has a doctorate in historical studies and is a lecturer at the Crimean Engineering and Pedagogical University ([Polyakov Vladimir Evgenevich](#)).

## Jewish Scholars

### Majer (Meir) Bałaban [Pseudonym: Emes] (1877–1942)



(Image Source: [Krakowski Kazimierz](#))

Majer Bałaban was a Polish-Jewish historian and educator.

He is known as the founder of modern Polish Jewish historiography and the first to synthesise Polish archival sources, Jewish communal records and Rabbinic responses (Shapiro 2010).

Bałaban was born in Lwów, Poland (currently Lviv in Ukraine) in the Austro-Hungarian centre of Polish Galicia. He was born into a prominent, though not prosperous, family that had served as communal leaders since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The family was traditionally hostile towards Hasidism. Young Bałaban studied in a German-language secondary school, while, at the same time, he acquired a Jewish education by taking classes in Hebrew schools. He began university in the law faculty in 1895, but soon had to leave his studies due to financial difficulties. He worked his way up by teaching at schools sponsored by the Baron de Hirsch Foundation (Shapiro 2010).

M. Bałaban resumed his attendance at the university in Lwów in 1900, but chose to study history under the supervision of Ludwik Finkel, the author of a classic bibliographic work on Polish history and the editor of the leading journal *Kwartalnik Historyczny*. By 1903, Bałaban had published in the journal the first annotated bibliography of historical literature on Jews in Poland. He continued bibliographical research throughout his career; publishing a collection of works related to the history of Polish Jews and the history of Jews in neighbouring territories. The first part of the collection was completed and published in 1939; the second section remained in manuscript form and, unfortunately, was lost during World War II (Shapiro 2010).

In 1904, the young scholar completed his dissertation entitled ‘Żydzi lwowscy na przełomie XVIgo i XVIIgo wieku’ [Jews in Lwów at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries].

Thereafter, he taught in secondary schools until the beginning of World War I, when he served as a military chaplain in the Austrian army. While stationed in Lublin, he used the opportunity to prepare a short monograph on the history of Jews in that community (Shapiro 2010).

From 1920 to 1930, Bałaban taught at the newly founded *Mizrahi* Rabbinical school, *Tahkemoni*, in Warsaw. In 1928, he began lecturing on Jewish history at the University of Warsaw and in 1935 became an associate professor. He was the only person who taught Jewish history on the university level in Poland between the wars. Many of Bałaban's students at the university also attended his lectures at the Institute for Jewish Studies, which he founded together with other scholars. All instructors except for Bałaban and Schiper, who lectured in Polish, conducted their classes in Hebrew. Bałaban's students produced more than 100 master's theses under his direction, mainly on Jewish communal histories. He insisted on using archival sources, and, in this way, trained an entire generation of Polish Jewish historians (Shapiro 2010).

Bałaban published hundreds of works in Polish, German, Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish. His popular essays appeared regularly in the Jewish press. His works are largely descriptive, focusing on leading personalities, families and religious movements and devoting considerable attention to material culture and daily life. In his local histories, for example, the topography of the Jewish quarter in various periods is described in great detail. Among his many outstanding works are his two-volume history of Jews in Krakow (1931, 1936, with a Hebrew translation in 2003), which remains the most detailed study of a leading Jewish community to date, and his Hebrew-language *History of the Frankist Movement* (2 vols., 1934–1935) (Shapiro 2010).

An elegant orator in Polish, Bałaban spoke often in the Progressive Synagogue in Lwów before 1914, and at *Nożyk* Synagogue in Warsaw after 1920. Active in general Zionist circles, he ran, however, unsuccessfully for parliament in 1919 and in 1922. In September 1939, Bałaban chose to remain in Warsaw, becoming the director of the *Judenrat* archive and continuing his research. He died of a heart attack in the ghetto in Poland (Shapiro 2010).

#### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Aleksion 2004: 41–54.
- Eisenbach 1989: 453–493.
- Biderman 1976.
- Dold 2004: 55–72.
- [Majer Bałaban](#) (Accessed: 02.07.2017).

**Harkavy, Avraam/Albert Yakovlevich [Гаркави, Альберт Яковлевич] [Hebrew: Avraham Eliyahu ben Yaakov Harkavy] (1835/1839–1919)**



(Image Source: [Wikipedia](#))

Avraam Yakovievich was a Russian Orientalist and historian of Jewish origin. He was born in Novogrudok, in the region of Minsk. His father, Jacob Harkavy, was wealthy merchant and prominent Talmudic scholar, connected by descent with the Jaffe family. At the age of fifteen, Harkavy's family sent Avraham to Volozhin to study in the *yeshiva*. After completing his coursework there, he took up secular studies, including German and French (Harkavy, in Brokhaus & Efron).

In 1858, Avraham entered the rabbinical school of Wilna; in 1863, he entered the University of St. Petersburg to study Oriental languages. In 1868, he obtained a master's degree in history, and his graduating thesis was entitled 'Skazaniya Mussulmanskikh Pisateley o Slavyanakh i Russkikh' [Legends by Muslim authors about the Slavs and Russians] (it was published in St. Petersburg in 1870). The university sent Harkavy abroad to qualify for the chair of Semitic history. He continued his studies in Berlin under Rödiger and Dümichen, and in Paris under Oppert (1868–70). However, due to a misunderstanding with one of the faculty, his appointment was not approved. In 1872, Harkavy graduated with a doctorate in history, his thesis being 'O Pervonachalnom Obitalishchye Semitov' [About the original dwelling place of the Semites], a study on the origin of the Semites, Aryans and Hamites. After graduation, he worked for the Ministry of Public Instruction (Harkavy, in Brokhaus & Efron).

From that time onwards, he began his work on the Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts in the Imperial Public Library of St. Petersburg; he devoted himself particularly to a critical examination of the Firkovich manuscripts. In 1877, Harkavy was appointed librarian, a post which he occupied until 1903. Since 1873, he had repeatedly travelled abroad in the interest of historical and archaeological research — e.g. to examine Biblical manuscripts (1873), as a delegate to the

Congress of Orientalists (1877) and to examine Palestinian and other Oriental monuments (1886). The Russian government awarded Harkavy with the Order of Saint Stanislas (3d and 2d degrees) and Order of Saint Anne for his achievements in historical research; he was also elevated to the rank of councillor of state. Harkavy continued to do research diligently for a period of more than forty years, and he contributed considerably to study of the early period of Russian-Jewish history. He has made accessible extensive collections that had previously been little known, thereby shedding new light on obscure periods in Russian as well as Russian-Jewish history. He published numerous works on the Jewish history of southern Russia, the Caucasus, Crimea, Khazaria and ancient Kiev. Harkavy also thoroughly investigated the history of the Polish-Lithuanian Jews and the Karaites, as well as A. Firkovich's documents, which he thought were forged (Harkavy, in Brokhaus & Efron).

Among Harkavy's most important works in Russian, Hebrew, German and French, we should mention *Ha-Yehudim u-Sefat ha-Slavim*, a study of the early history of Jews in Russia, first published in Russian by the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society under the title *Ob Yazykye Yevreyev* [About the Jewish language] (St. Petersburg, 1865). The aim of the treatise was to prove that the first Jews who settled in southern Russia did not come from Germany, as was supposed by Grätz and other historians, but from Greece via the Black Sea region and Crimea and from the Orient via Caucasus. He also argued that the Jews of Eastern Europe had spoken a Slavonic language until the arrival of the German Jews in great numbers during the Crusades. He proved that Jewish writers in Russia and other Slavonic countries used Slavonic words and phrases in their Biblical and Talmudic commentaries (Harkavy, in Brokhaus & Efron).

His other important works include *Skazaniya Yevreiskikh Pisatelei O Chazarskom Tzarstvye* [Stories by Jewish Writers about the Khazarian Kingdom] (St. Petersburg, 1874) and *Chazarskiya Pisma* [Khazar Letters] (in *Yevreiskaya Biblioteka*, 1881–82).

#### **Sources and further reading:**

- A complete bibliography of Harkavy's writings is now in course of publication by David Maggid of St. Petersburg;
- Reines 1890.

#### **Weissenberg, Samuel Abramovich [Вайсенберг, Самуил Абрамович] (1867–1928)**

Samuel Weissenberg was a Russian-Jewish physician and anthropologist. He was born in Yelizavetgrad (Kherson region, currently Ukraine). Weissenberg completed public schooling in his home town before entering the Polytechnicum in Karlsruhe, Baden, in 1884. He received a medical degree in Heidelberg in 1890. Then, he began working as a doctor in Elisavetgrad in 1895 (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

At the same time, he carried out anthropological studies of Jews in southern Russia. His main work was a compendium of anthropological investigations of the Jews of southern Russia called 'Die Südrussischen Juden' in *Archiv für Anthropologie* (1895). In it, he wrote that the Jews have a mixed anthropological type (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

Weissenberg also carried out anthropological research on the Karaites. In his works about the Karaites, he stated that the Crimean Tatars and Karaites have a kinship (see, e.g. *Russkiy Antropologicheskii Zhurnal* 1–2, 1904; 'Die Karäer der Krim', in *Globus*, lxxxiv.). He also studied the Sephardi Jews of the Middle East. He made a contribution to general anthropology as well (e.g. his work *O Razlichnyh Razmerah Litsa i Litsevyh Ukazatelyah*, 1897) (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

His other works were published in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* and in *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft* in Vienna. Weissenberg also published articles on Jewish proverbs and folk songs in the journal on Jewish folklore *Globus* (*Jewish Encyclopedia* 1906).

**Source:**

- Weissenberg Samuel Abramovich. In *Evreyskaya Encyclopaedia Brokhausa and Efrona*. St.Petersburg. 1906-1913.

## **Karaite scholars**

### **Beim, Solomon [Бейм, Соломон] (1817/1818/1819–1867)**

Solomon Beim was born around 1817 in Chufut-Kale (Crimea) into a family of a well-known religious Karaite figure — the *gazzan* of the Odessa Karaite community, Abraham Beim, who was quite well known in Russian and European Enlightenment circles in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Solomon received a good secondary education. Besides Russian, Karaite and old Hebrew, he also knew French and German. M. Sultanskiy provided him with a traditional Karaite education (he was also the teacher of A.S. Firkovich) (Belyi. [Novye materialy](#)).

In 1839, Beim followed Firkovich on his first expedition around Crimea to search for Jewish antiquities. Later, he conducted further independently. In 1842, he served as a guide and interpreter for B. Schtern, who was sent to Crimea to check the authenticity of Firkovich's finds. In the middle of the 1840s, he independently excavated Chufut-Kale as well as the foothills of Agarmysh Mountain (Solkhata). In 1852, at a meeting of the Imperial Archaeological Society, he proposed his own programme for exploring Jewish and Karaite antiquities in Crimea. At the same time, he became a member of the Imperial Geographical Society (Belyi. [Novye materialy](#); *Evreyskaya encyclopaedia* 1906–1913, V.IV).

From the end of the 1850s to the beginning of the 1860s, Beim was a *gazzan* of the Karaite community in Chufut-Kale. Simultaneously, he published a study on the history of Chufut-Kale and the Karaites. During this time, irreconcilable differences arose between Beim and Firkovich. This was due to issues concerning the study and preservation of the Karaite monuments at the graveyard in the Iosafat valley (Belyi. [Novye materialy](#)).

From 1855 until 1857, Beim apparently substituted for the deceased Tavrisc and Odessa *hakham* S.S. Babovich. After the death of his father, who was serving as Odessa's *gazzan*, Beim moved to Odessa ([Belyi. Novye materialy](#); *Evreyskaya encyclopaedia* 1906–1913, V. IV).

In 1861, Emperor Aleksander II visited Chufut-Kale, where Beim played the role of host. To show his appreciation, the emperor invited Beim to his dacha (a summer palace) in Livadia, where Beim spent the summer with his family in 1863. According to S. Prik, the emperor entrusted Beim with the task of making for him a few Karaite miniature figures in national clothes. Beim died in 1867, when travelling to St. Petersburg to present the figures to the emperor (Belyi. [Novye materialy](#)).

#### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Poznanskiy 1906-1913.
- Elyashevich 1993: 21-23, 41-42.
- Feldman 2000.

**Firkovich, Abraham (Avraham) ben Samuel, [in Polish: Firkowicz, Abraham; in Hebrew: אברהם בן שמואל – *Avraham ben Shmuel*; in Russian: Фиркович, Авраам] (1786–1874)**



(Image Source: [Wikipedia](#))

Abraham ben Rabbi Shemuel Firkovich (*ABen ReSheF* — as he was known in Karaite and Jewish circles) is the most famous leader of the Crimean Karaites. He was born in Łutsk, in the



Wołyń region (which was then a part of Poland), into a farming family. Later, he lived in Lithuania, but most of his social/scholarly activities are connected with Crimea. He spent his last decade in the 'Karaite fortress' of Chufut Kale. Firkovich was a leader of the Karaite community and a *hakham*. He is also best known, far beyond Karaite circles, as a collector of manuscripts and an amateur archaeologist — discoverer of the ancient Karaite monuments (Abraham Firkovich, in *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

Although Firkovich did not receive a traditional Karaite education in his youth due to the poverty of his family, at the age of 30 he began studies under the supervision of the leading scholar of the day, Mordecai Sultansky, who noticed his talent, and so he became highly educated in Hebrew (Harviainen 1998).

In 1818, Firkovich received the title of *erbi* in the *yeshivah* of Luck. He also tried to obtain a position of *hazzan* of his native city, but this led to a conflict with Sultansky. Hence, Firkovich decided to accept a position of teacher in the Karaite school in Eupatoria, where he taught Sima Babovich; he moved there in 1822. In 1828, he lived in Berdichev and had several strong disagreements with some Rabbinate Jews, with the result being his anti-Rabbinical work *Masah u-Meribah* (Eupatoria, 1838) (Harviainen 1998; *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

In 1830, Firkovich visited Jerusalem, where he collected many Karaite and Rabbanite manuscripts. On his way back, he stayed for two years in Constantinople teaching the Karaite youth there. Then, he returned to Crimea and established a printing society to publish old Karaite works, several of which appeared in Eupatoria with his comments. In 1838, he taught one of Sima Babovich's children, who one year later recommended him to Count Vorontzov and to the Historical Society of Odessa as a suitable man to collect materials on the history of the Karaites. This task became the great passion of Firkovich's life (Harviainen 1998; *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

In 1839, Firkovich began excavating the ancient Karaite cemetery of Chufut Kale, where he found many old tombstones, some of which, he claimed, dated back to the first centuries CE. The following two years he spent travelling in the Caucasus region, where he visited synagogues of the old Jewish communities and obtained, sometimes in an unfair and aggressive manner, many valuable manuscripts from the *genizot* (a store-room in a synagogue). He went as far as Derbent, before returning in 1842. In later years, he made other trips of the same nature, visiting Egypt and other countries. In 1871, he visited a small Karaite community in Halych, Galicia, where he introduced several reforms. He returned to spend his last days in Chufut Kale, which became almost devoid of population at that time because it had lost its former importance. However, you can still find Abraham Firkovich's house in good condition if you visit the former Karaite fortress (Harviainen 1998; *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

Firkovich's main achievement is that he collected a great number of Hebrew, Arabic and Samaritan manuscripts during his many travels. The *First Firkovich Collection* includes thousands of Karaite and Rabbinic documents from around the Russian Empire. The *Second Firkovich*

*Collection* contained old documents from the Cairo *Genizah*. He visited it in 1863, and was one of the first to visit with the intention of cataloguing and studying its contents. Although, Solomon Schechter's trip, which took place 34 years later, is better known, Firkovich obtained some of the most important of the documents contained in the Genizah. Though the *Second Firkovich Collection* contains only 13,700 items in comparison to Schechter's 140,000, Firkovich's documents are generally more complete. Upon his death in 1874, the Russian National Library bought Firkovich's collection. Among the treasures in the Firkovich collection is a manuscript called the *Garden of Metaphors*, an aesthetic appreciation of Biblical literature written in Judeo-Arabic by one of the greatest of the Sephardi poets, Moses ibn Ezra (Harviainen 1998; *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

Many scholars claimed that Firkovich forged dates and inscriptions on tombstones and manuscripts. Unfortunately, because of this accusation any document that passed through Firkovich's hands is academically suspect (Harviainen 1998; *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

In his later years, the Karaite scholar introduced a theory based on the documents he had found, according to which the Crimean Karaites were descendants of the Israelite tribes who had arrived in Crimea before the common era (and thus, not being guilty of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ). His theory certainly put the Karaites in a good light, with the result being that the Russian Imperial Court excluded them from the restrictive measures taken against other Jews (Harviainen 1998; *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

Firkovich's main work is entitled *Abne (Avnei) Zikkaron* [Stones of Remembrance] (Wilna, 1872), which contains the texts from inscriptions, including the relief squeeze copies, the Karaite tombstones discovered by him. His other works include *Khotam Toknit*, an anti-rabbinical polemic (Eupatoria, 1835), *Evel Kavod*, a memoir of the death of his wife and his son Jacob (Odessa, 1866), and *Bene Reshef*, a collection of essays and poems published by Peretz Smolenskin (Vienna, 1871) (Harviainen 1998; *Jewish Encyclopaedia* 1906).

#### **Other Sources and further reading:**

- Ben-Sasson 1991: 47-67.
- Harkavy 1877a, reprinted in Wiesbaden in 1969.
- Harviainen 2003: 875-892.
- Harviainen 1998: 66-70.
- Harviainen 1999: 97-106.
- Markon 2007: 857-58.
- Markon 2007a: 1017-19.
- Kizilov 2003b.
- Miller 1993.

- Shapira 2006: 131-180.
- Shapira 2003a.
- Shapira 2002–2003: 223-260.
- [Josephs 2001](#).
- Vikhnovich 1997: 204.
- Kizilov 2005: 218-221.
- Kizilov & Shchegoleva 2003d: 319-362.

### **Kazas, Илья [Казас, Илья] (1833–1912)**

Ilya Kazas was a Crimean Karaite, a philologist, a Hebraist, a theologian and a poet. He was also a teacher, scholar and social activist. He was employed as a teacher in Aleksandr's Religious Karaite College. Kazas was the author and editor of textbooks for Karaite schools. He spent his professional and social life in Simferopol and Evpatoria ([Jazyszlar](#)).

### **Kefeli, V.I. (1937, Moscow)**

V.I. Kefeli is a professor and director of the Institute of Soil Science and Photosynthesis in the Russian Academy of Science. In 1989, he established a Karaite museum in Pushchino (Moscow region). Between 1994 and 1996, he was the head of Karaimskie Vesti. In 1996, he moved to the United States, where he still currently resides; he established the International Institute of Crimean Karaites in Pennsylvania in 2003 (Kefeli).

### **Kobeckaite, Galina (Halina) (20 December 1939)**

Galina Kobeckaite is a journalist, translator and activist of the Karaim minority. She has worked as an ambassador in Estonia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Finland.

She was born into a Karaite family in Trakai (Lithuania). She graduated from the Faculty of Journalism at Vilnius University, and later received a PhD in Polish esthetics in Moscow.

She is the author of several articles on Karaite history and identity (Prabook).

**Lavrynovych, Mark Mikhailovich (Лавринович, Марк Михайлович) (26 December 1938–11 December 2011)**



(Image Source: [kale.at.ua](http://kale.at.ua))

Mark Lavrynovych was born in Trakai in 1938. In 1961, after graduating from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering at Kaunas Polytechnic Institute, he was assigned to work in one of the institutes of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Since 1963, he has worked at a computer design company (the future Sigma Production Unification). In 1968, he defended his thesis in the field of computer sciences. From 1968 to 1991, he worked in the field of microelectronics. In 1988, he started working on his native Karaite language. He is the author of a coursebook on Karaite grammar and the *Great Karaite-Russian Dictionary*. He has translated the following works into his native language: a collection of folk tales, an abbreviated version of the Old Testament for children and a computer application for studying the Karaite language. He chaired the organisational committees of the International Karaite Congress in 1989 and a committee for the celebration of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Karaites in Lithuania in 1997. In 2009, he was elected *Hachan/Gahan* of the Lithuanian Karaites and held this important post until his death on 24 December 2011. Mark Lavrynovych made an invaluable contribution to the preservation and revival of the cultural heritage of the Karaites. He was noted for his erudition, responsiveness, kindness and remarkable organisational skills and he was highly respected by all members of the local Karaite community. He was deeply devoted to the Karaites and was an excellent example of service to his people ([Mark Lavrinovich](#)).

## **Lebedeva, Emilia Isaakovna [Лебедева, Эмилия Исааковна]**

Emilia Lebedeva is a Karaite author who is known for her works on the popular history and culture of the Karaites. She was born in Crimea and graduated from the Faculty of History at the Crimean State Teacher's Institute. She is a teacher of history.

She is the author of articles in the *Karaimskaya Narodnaya Entsiklopedia* and of numerous books (in Russian):

*Outline of the History of the Crimean Karaites-Turks* (Очерки по истории крымских караимов-тюрков)

*Example for the Next Generation* (Пример для потомства)

*The Karaites – An Ancient Crimean People* (Караимы — древний народ Крыма)  
(coauthored with Kefeli, V.I.)

*Weddings* (Свадьбы)

*Moscow Karaites of the Russian Empire* (Московские караимы в Российской империи)

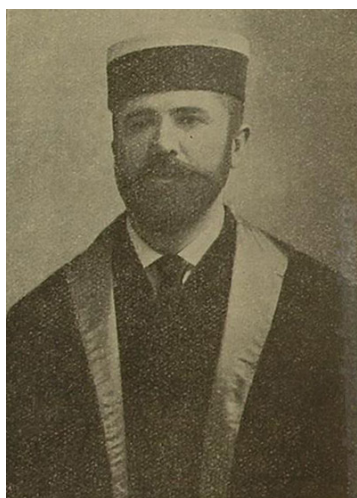
*The Crimean War and the Karaites* (Крымская война и караимы)

*Recipes of Karaite Cuisine* (Рецепты караимской кухни)

*Encyclopaedia of Culinary Art* (энциклопедия Кулинарное искусство народов Крыма).

([Fenomen Karaimov](#))

## **Levi Babovich, Tobiya Sima (Toviya Simovich) [Бабович, Товия Симович Леви] (1879–1956)**



(Image Source: [Caraimica](#))

Levi Tobiya Babovich was a Karaite theologist, teacher, writer, polemicist and *gazzan* in Sevastopol from 1910 to 1930. After the closing of the *kenessa* in the Soviet Union in 1934, he became a chief *hakham* of the Karaite community in Cairo, where performed his duties until his death in 1956. Levy Tobiya Bobovich preserved the ancient Karaite scrolls. He was one of three men who were instructed in writing the history of the Crimean Karaites. Tobiya Bobovich adhered to the idea that the Karaites are the descendants of the ancient Turks. In this regard, he frequently entered into heated arguments with the Egyptian Karaite Jews (Elyashevich 1993).

He was born in Chufut-Kale in 1879 into a poor family. He finished Bakhchisaray Municipal College and obtained the status of *erbi* from M. Sultanskiy. Having no funding to pursue higher education, he satisfied his craving for knowledge through constant self-education and reading. In this way, he gained significant knowledge of Russian, ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, Crimean-Tatar, Turkish, Arabic and German and a knowledge of the Persian languages and literature and Karaite spoken language ([Karaimy – Zal Slavy](#)).

**Mardkovich, Aleksandr Markovich (Aleksander Mardkowicz / Kokizow) [Маркович, Александр] (1875–1944)**



(Image Source: [Caraimica](#))

Aleksandr Markovich was a writer, poet and author of articles about Karaite language and culture. He was born on 24 February 1875, in Lutsk. He was born into an underprivileged family. His mother Anna's birth name was Lokshinska. His father, Mark, was a teacher at an elementary school, who had moved from Kukizov to Lutsk, and he was the last member of the Kukizov community. In Lutsk, the Mardkovich family lived on Karaimska Street, where all activities of the Lutsk Karaite community were concentrated ([Aleksandr Mardkovich](#)).

Alexander Mardkovich completed elementary and grammar school, after which he began to work in a notary office. In 1901, he left Lutsk to live in Brest, and later moved to Ekaterinoslav. There he also worked in a notary office and simultaneously continued his education on legal rates in Kiev. In 1903, he passed an examination for the right to independently discharge notary duties with distinction, and he subsequently opened his own notary office ([Aleksandr Mardkovich](#)).

He actively participated in the public life of the local Karaite community. At the same time, he published two articles in the journal *Karaimskaya Zhizn* [Karaite Life] (Moscow, 1911–1912). When the Russian Revolution broke out in 1917, the Mardkovich family returned to Poland. In December of 1921, they settled once again in their native town of Lutsk. In Lutsk, Alexander Mardkovich began working in a notary office while simultaneously devoting himself to actively working on behalf of the Karaite community. Alexander Mardkovich donated his time to the Karaite Aleksandrovsy spiritual school and was a member on a committee for restoring the kenassa in Lutsk (after 1921) ([Aleksandr Mardkovich](#)).

He briefly served as chairman of the board for the Lutsk Karaite community. Mardkovich helped Karaites settle in the area and receive a legal status. He also prepared charters for Karaite communities and the Charter of the Karaite Religious Union ([Aleksandr Mardkovich](#)).

Aware that the Karaite language was gradually dying out, he began establishing Karaite publishing houses at the end of the 1920 ([Aleksandr Mardkovich](#)).

Between 1930 and 1939, Mardkovich published 16 books, 11 of which were in the Karaite language. He was not only an author, but also prepared books for publication. He printed and published them at his own expense. The Second World War put an end to Alexander Mardkovich's activity. He died on the 5th of April 1944 and was buried in his native town of Lutsk ([Aleksandr Mardkovich](#)).

#### A. Mardkovich's works in the Karaite language:

- Cycle *Little Karaite library*.
- *Elijahunun Ucuru* [Adventure of Eliyagu], 1930.
- *Birtihi Keklernin* [Grain of heavens] 1931.
- *Aj Jaryhynda* [In a moonlight], 1933,
- *Aziz Tas* [Saint stone], 1934.
- *Zemerler* [Collection of religious songs] 1931.
- *Luwachlar dert jiltha* [Calendar for four years]: contains, except for tables, popular scientific articles and small literary works), 1932.
- Poem *Halic* [Galich], 1937.
- *Janhy Jirlar* [New Songs], 1937.
- *Szelomit* [Shelomit], 1938.

- Collection of Quatrains *Tozdurhan Birtik* [Spilt grain], 1939.

Works in Polish language:

- *Synowie Zakonu* [Sons of the Law], 1930.
- *O Iljaszu Karaimowiczu Zwierzchniku Wojsk Zaporoskich* [About Elyash Karaimovich, a Leader of Zaporozhye Army], 1931.
- *Ogniska Karaimskie* [Karaite Lights] 1932, 1934, 1936.
- *Karaim, Jego Życie i Zwyczaje w Przysłowiach Ludowych* [A Karaite, His Life and Customs in National Proverbs], 1935.
- *Krótki Wykład Gramatyki Języka Zachodnio-Karaimskiego* [Summary of Grammar of the Western Karaite Language].
- Was in editor board of A. Zaczkowski's *Słownik karaimsko-polsko-niemiecki* (*Karaite-Polish-German Dictionary* in volume of 4417 entries, 1935).
- Articles in Magazine *Karaj Awazy*.

A. Mardkovich's great ambition in life was to publish a magazine in the Karaite language. In the years between 1931 and 1939, he published twelve issues of *Karaj Awazy* [Karaite Voice], which contained articles on various topics, literary works, children's poems and riddles, and information on actual events in the life of Karaite communities in Poland and elsewhere. While Mardkovich was responsible for the majority of the publications, other contributors included T. Levi-Babovich, Z. Zarahovich, B. Kokenaj, J. Maletsky, S. Rudkovsky and S. Firkovich; the magazine also published poems by Z. Abragamovich, and S. Kobetsky and S. Lopatto and essays by Moshe Derje and Rabbi Joseph from Derzhavny ([Aleksandr Mardkovich](#)).

### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Sulimowicz 2007: 32–33.

### **Nowachowicz, Zachariasz (5 June 1883 – 25 March 1960)**

Zachariasz Nowachowicz was a head of the Karaite community in Halich. He was born in Chrzanów into a family originally from Kukizow (near Lviv).

Nowachowicz participated in the Polish independence movement and in World War I. In 1917, he received a PhD in law from the University of Lwow and became an advocate. Later, Nowachowicz moved to Halich and became head of the Karaite community. He worked on the



statute of Karaite Religious Relation in the Republic of Poland from 1936 onwards (Zygmunt 2001).

Nowachowicz moved back to Chrzanów after World War II. Since he was not granted the right to work as a lawyer, he began work as a public notary instead. In 1948, Z. Nowachowicz became of a member of the Karaite Religious Board, which was approved by the Ministry of Public Administration (Zygmunt 2001).

He was married to Sabina Samuelowicz (1885–1960), a teacher and active member of Karaite society in Halich (Zygmunt 2001).

Zachariasz Nowachowicz and his wife were buried first in Chrzanów, but later exhumed and re-buried in the Karaite graveyard in Warsaw (Zygmunt 2001).

### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Abkowicz & Sulimowicz 2010.
- Machul-Telus 2012.

### **Pilecky, Shimon (b. 1925)**

Shimon Pilecky was born in 1925 in Troki (then a part of Poland; today it is considered part of Lithuania) into a Karaite family.

In 1974, he was elected chairman of the board of the Karaite Religious Association in Poland. In 1975, he organised several Karaite congresses in Warsaw to help promote social communication. He put considerable effort into enlarging Karaite cemeteries in Warsaw. He drafted a law on the Karaite status in Poland, which was confirmed by authorities in 1974. He participated in the establishment of the magazine *Awazymyz* and in the revival of Karaite cultural activity — organising exhibitions, meetings and conferences.

He helped spread knowledge about Karaites in particular as the author of texts and as a participant in television programmes and films: *Last Gazzan* (1986); *The Karaites — A Disappearing Nation* (1994); *The Karaites* (1996); *Polish Karaites* (2001); *At the Edge of the World* (2001); *The Karaites — The Smallest Minority* (2008) ([Szymon Pilecki](#)).

### **Polkanov, Yuriy Aleksandrovich (b. 10 March 1935, Simferopol)**

Aleksandrovich Polkanov is a well-known Karaite ideologist. He is the author of many articles on the Karaites, head of the Association of Crimean Karaites, a respected academic at the Crimean Academy of Science and the Academy of Technological Science of Ukraine, a Doctor of Geology and Mineralogy Science and a recipient of a state award by the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and a state award in the field of science and technology ([Polkanov Yuriy Aleksandrovich](#)).

He is an active advocate and a propagandist for the Turkic ethno-cultural identity of the Karaites (Shchegoleva 2003: 230).

He was born into a Russian-Karaite family in Simferopol. His father, A.I. Polkanov (1874–1971), was a famous historian and ethnographer; during the Second World War, he published a work arguing for the Turkic origin of the Karaites in order to save them from the Holocaust.

Polkanov is a well-known student of the Karaite people. He is an activist in the movement to save the historical and cultural heritage of the Crimean Karaites. Since 1989, he has been re-elected many times as a member of the praesidium of the Ukrainian Association of Crimean Karaites and served for 16 years as head of the association's scholarly council, helping make him a key figure in the formation of the historical consciousness and identity of the Crimean Karaites. He has actively promoted the establishment and development of the national-cultural movement of the Crimean Karaites. He has participated in the organisation of ethnocultural expositions and of restoration works in Djuft Kale. He is an organiser of the youth summer working camps in Djuft Kale. He has also helped develop and gain approval for the state programme 'Activities for State Support of the Preservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Crimean Karaites and Krymchaks Until 2005'. He has been an active participant in international conferences and symposiums for Karaite Studies in Russia, France, Lithuania, Austria and Cyprus, among other countries.

He is the author of more than 50 publications in the field of Karaite ethnocultural studies. Russian and Ukrainian media and scholars often cite his views.

### **Polkanov's Main publications in Karaite Studies (in Russian)**

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**Sarach, Mikhail Semenovich [Сарач, Михаил Семенович] (b. 1 September 1910, Moscow – d. 2000, France)**

Mikhail Sarach was a Karaite lawyer, entrepreneur, ideological leader and philanthropist working on behalf of the Karaites.

He was born into a Karaite family in September 1910 in Moscow. In 1920, Mihail immigrated with his parents first to Turkey and then through the former Yugoslavia to France. He completed military school in the former Yugoslavia, followed by studies at a school run by Jesuit monks for Russian emigrants and then, in 1936, enrolling in the faculty of law at a university in Paris. He converted to Orthodox Christianity along with most other Crimean Karaites emigrants ([Sarach 1996](#)).

He worked as an advocate, later becoming an entrepreneur. At the beginning of the Second World War, he was recruited into the French army, escaped from captivity and participated in the resistance movement.

In 1991, the Moscow Karaite society contacted Sarach for the first time and asked for financial help with publication of *Karaimskie Vesti*. He took over responsibility for funding the publication of the journal and the first issue appeared in February 1994 (Shchegoleva 2007: 14). In 1992, he established a foundation that in 1994 gained official legal status under the name Centre of Karaite Culture and Development 'Karajlar' (Kazas 1994). The foundation played an important role in organising various Karaite events, publishing Karaite books and granting cash benefits to Karaites (Tikhonova 2000; Sarach 2000). According to E. Lebedeva, during his last 5–6 years of life Sarach granted up to 100 000 dollars per year in financial assistance to Karaites living in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Rostov and Crimea. Thus, Karaite pensioners in Moscow received aid from him 3–4 times per year, which considerably exceeded their own pensions (Lebedeva 2002: 105).

Sarach initiated and financed the publication of the *Karaite National Encyclopedia* (which was supposed to include 10 volumes, but only six were published because of the premature death of Sarach). He funded publication of the newspaper *Karaimskie Vesti* during the years 1994–2002. He wrote the 2nd volume of the encyclopaedia (Religion of the Crimean Karaites) and also a series of the publications about Karaite religion and history. He adhered to the Turkic identification of Karaites.

Mikhail Sarach died in France on 14 August 2000 and was buried in Bulon wood. A Crimean Karaite community put a cenotaph (in Karaim, *Joldzy-tash*) in his memory at the entrance to Iosafat Valley, close to A. Firkovich's monument (Schegoleva 2003).<sup>206</sup>

### **Main Sarach's Works (in Russian):**

Сарач М. С. Слово о вере и религии караимов // «Караимские вести» : газета. — Москва, 1994. — № 3. — С. 1.

- Сарач М. С. Учение Иисуса Христа и христианские религии // «Караимские вести» : газета. — Москва, 1994. — № май. Приложение. — С. 1.

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<sup>206</sup>However, there are some grammatical errors on the monument and an incorrect date for M. Sarach's birth (Schegoleva 2003).



- Сарач М. С. Пророки, Коран и религии // «Караимские вести» : газета. — Москва, 1994. — № декабрь. Приложение. — С. 1.
- Сарач М. С., Казас М. М. Вступительное слово о караимском языке // «Караимские вести»: газета. — Москва, 1995. — № 17. — С. 1.
- Сарач М. С. Учение Анана. Анан бен Давид, его вера и учение VIII века, широко применяемые в XX веке. — Париж, 1996. — 31 с.
- Сарач М. С. Анан — бен — Давид — последователь Сократа. — М., 1997. — 8 с.
- Сарач М. С. История и суть религиозных верований. — Москва-Париж, 2000. — 172 с.
- Сарач М. С. Религия крымских караев (караимов) // Караимская народная энциклопедия. Том II. Вера и религия. — Париж, 1996. — 169 с.

#### **Other sources and further reading:**

Kazas 1994a: 1.

- [Sarach, Mihail \(Mark\) Semenovich.](#)

**Szapszał, Seraya [Karaites: *Haji Seraya Hachan Szapszał*, Russian: Шапшал, Серая (Сергей) Маркович; Polish: Szapszał, Seraj] (1873–1961)**



(Image Source: [Tribute to H. S. H. Szapszał at Trakai History Museum](#)).

Seraya Szapszał was a Karaite philologist, orientalist, held a doctorate in philology and was a professor. He was chairman of a branch of the Near East of Petersburg Society of Russian Orientalists, editor of the *East Collection*, an acting member of the Society of Oriental Studies as well as various geographical and archaeological societies, member of the Taurian Scientific Archival Commission, vice-president of the Polish Society of Orientalists and a member of the Polish and Krakow Academies of Science. He had a military rank of general-aide-de-camp. He was *hakhan* of the Karaite religious communities both in the Soviet Union and in Persia (Elyashevich 1993; [Seraya Markovich Szapszał](#)).

Szapszał was born in Bahçesaray, Crimea, into the family of a gardener. He studied at St. Petersburg University, where he received a doctorate in philology and oriental languages and stayed to work there. He lived in Iran during the years 1901–1908, where he studied the Azerbaijani and Persian languages and taught Russian in Tebriz. He was invited to serve as a personal tutor for the Iranian crown prince, Mohammad Ali Shah, who soon thereafter became shah and invited Szapszał to work in the position of councillor in the Persian government in 1907. In 1908, he returned to Russia, taught Turkish at St. Petersburg University and worked as an interpreter in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Karaite community appreciated Szapszał's moral principles and deep knowledge of Karaite religion, language and culture. In 1915, he was elected to be the Taurian chief *hakham* of the Crimean Karaite communities. During World War I, Szapszał established a museum of history and ethnography in Evpathoria and the national library *Karay Bitikligi* (Elyashevich 1993; [Seraya Markovich Szapszał](#)).

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, Szapszał criticised both the White and Red sides of inciting terror. He was saved by a miracle, avoided being shot through the assistance of the Kumysh

family and escaped from Crimea to Turkey in 1919. From 1919 to 1927, he lived in Istanbul, holding a post as translator in a bank, conducting scientific research, reading lectures on Turkic languages in one of the high educational institutions of the city in 1920–1925 and publishing articles in local periodicals. He also published a book called *Crimean Karaim-Turks* in the Turkish language (Elyashevich 1993; [Seraya Markovich Szapszał](#)).

In 1927, Szapszał moved to Vilnius and became *hakham* of Karaites in Poland and Lithuania. In Vilnius, he was a professor in the Department of Turkish language. There, he established the Society of Lovers of History and Literature of Karaites and a Karaite *kenasa*. Although, based on a letter sent to Falashas in 1905, we can see that Szapszał identified the Karaites with Jews, later Szapszał began to safeguard his people's future by beginning to deny any connection between Karaites and Rabbinic Jews. During World War II, he saved Karaites from genocide, having proved to the German administration that the Karaite people were not of Jewish origin. He managed to protect the Karaite museum collection and the most valuable literature from being plundered (Elyashevich 1993; [Seraya Markovich Szapszał](#)).

After the war, the Karaite leader lived in Trakai and later in Vilnius, teaching at the Soviet Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. He was a co-author of the *Karaite-Russian-Polish Dictionary* (published in 1974) and wrote a number of articles on the Karaites of Crimea. His *History of the Karaites* remains unpublished. Part of his collections and books are kept in the Karaite museum in the old *kenesa* of Trakai. Seraya Szapszał died in 1961 and was buried in a Karaite cemetery in Vilnius (Elyashevich 1993; [Seraya Markovich Szapszał](#)).

#### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Lebedeva 2000.
- *Karaimskaya narodnaya encyclopedia* 1995.
- Baskakov & Tinfovich 1973: 119–121.
- *Seraya Szapszał's Karaite Collection* 2003.
- Shapira 2002.

**Szyszman, Shimon (Simon) Borisovich [Шисман, Симон] (1909–1993)**



(Image Source: [Caraimica](#))

Shimon Szyszman was a Karaite historian and public figure. He was born in 1909 in Simferopol into a Karaite family famous for its community activity ([Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#)).

His grandfather published at his own expense prayer books in the Karaite language in 1891–1892, written using the ancient biblical Hebrew font. They were distributed to all Karaite communities both in the territory of Russia and abroad. It is necessary to note that the Karaite diaspora of Egyptian Karaites in Israel even today continue to use newer editions of these prayer books ([Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#)).

In the 1920s, Simon settled with his parents in Wilna. In 1928, he completed secondary school and entered the university under the name Stefan Batory. He studied in the Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences, and in 1933 he obtained a Magister degree from the Department of Chemistry. He worked in Wilna as an assistant to Professor Slovensky, (until 1939) and in Warsaw as an assistant to Professor Akhmatova ([Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#)).

In 1942, he travelled to the then-occupied Simferopol and returned to Wilna through Bulgaria and Romania; he worked in Wilna as director of the chemical factory *Dayiva*.

In 1944, he moved to France. After the end of the Second World War, Szyszman moved to the Near East, to Lebanon, where he taught at the American University in Beirut ([Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#)).

At the same time, he studied the Karaites and visited a number of places where Karaites lived. In particular, he visited Damascus, where a community of Karaites had lived until 1831. He also visited the Cairo community of Karaites, and twice the Istanbul Karaites community ([Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#)).

From the Near East, Simon Szyszman moved to Italy and then settled in Paris, where he completed his education in the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne and the College de

France. He was a student and a friend of the well-known scholar Andre Duppon-Somme (André Dupont-Sommer) and also the famous Karaite public figure Semen Ezrovich Davan. Semen Borisovich Szyszman died on 22 February 1993 in Paris ([Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#)).

Simon Szyszman studied the history and culture of different Karaite communities around the world. He devoted most of his life to conducting research on Karaism and the history of their religion. Since 1973, Simon Szyszman edited a magazine called *Bulletin d'etudes Karaites*. In 1980, he issued a book called *Le Karaïsme. Ses doctrines et son histoire* [Karaism: History and Doctrine] in French. This book has been translated into Lithuanian and Polish. Szyszman also published *Les Karaites d'Europe* [Karaites of Europe] and a large number of articles concerning Karaism:

- Les karaites de Byzance (Bulletin d'etudes karaites);
- Le roi Bulan et le probleme de la conversion des Khazars (Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, t.XXXIII, fasc.1, 1957);
- Les Khazars. Problemes et controverses (Revue de l'histoire des religions, t.CLII, 2, 1957);
- Stulecie Karaimskiego Zarzadu Duchownego w Trokach (Teki historyczny, t.VIII, 1956–1957);
- Centenaire de la mort de Firkowicz (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, v.XXVIII, 1975);
- La famille des massorettes karaites Ben Asher et le Codex Alepensis, 1967);
- Les inscriptions funeraires decouvertes par Abraham Firkowicz, 1975;
- La treizieme tribu en Khazarie: un mythe;
- Les Karaïtes sont-ils destinés à être méconnus?, 1989;
- Gustaf Peringers Mission bei den Karäern, ZDMG XXVII, (102), 1952, 215–228;
- À propos du Karaïsme et des textes de la Mer Morte, VT II, 1952, 343–348;
- Les Khazars, problèmes et controverses, RHR CLII, 1957, 174–181;
- Communauté Karaïte d'Istamboul, VT VI, 1956, 309–315;
- A. Firkowicz, faussaire de génie ou collectionneur hors pair ?, Bulletin de la Société Ernest Renan (NS), XXIII, 232–235; Die Karäer in Ost–Mitteleuropa, Zeitschrift für Ostforschung, VI, 1957, 24–54;
- Une Pâque chrétienne célébrée le mercredi au xiii<sup>e</sup> siècle ?, в : Gerard J. Norton & Stephen Pisano, Tradition of the Text. Studies Offered to Dominique Barthélemy in Celebration of his 70th Birthday (OBO, 109), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991
- ([Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#)).

**Source:**

- [Szyszman, Semen Borisovich](#).

### **Zajączkowski, Ananiasz / Ananjasz (1903–1970)**



(Image Source: [Caraimica](#))

Ananij Akhnezerovich Zajonchkowsky (Ananijash/Ananiasz Zajączkowski) was an outstanding scientist, Karaite public figure, Polish orientalist, academician of the Polish SA) (1952) and professor at Warsaw University (since 1935) ([Zajonchkowsky](#)).

He was born on 12 November 1903 in Vilno (Russian Empire) into the family of Akhnezer (Aleksandr), who was an employee at the judicial office, and Emilia, nee Bezekovich. In 1915, during World War I, when fierce fighting was taking place in the territory of Baltica, Zajączkowski's family fled to Crimea, where their grandparents were originally from. Ananiasz Zajączkowski went to Simferopol's compulsory school under the name of Aleksandr I, which he completed in 1921. We can find his name on the lists of students in archival documents in the school museum. In later grades, the young man took a great interest in theatre. On summer vacations, he organised an amateur troupe, which travelled and gave performances along the southern coast of Crimea. After the end of the civil war in 1922, Zajączkowski's family returned to Wilna, which became a Polish city. A certificate of his having completed school in Simferopol was not recognised by the authorities. In 1923, Ananij studied in a school in Vilnius under the name King Zygmunt August, which he completed with distinction in 1925. In the same year, he started to study at the Faculty of East Philology at Jagiellonski University in Krakow under the direction of the most well-known (in this period) professor of orientalism, Tadeusz Kowalski. In 1929, he defended his thesis to obtain a doctorate in philosophy. Zajączkowski received a scholarship from the National fund of Culture and continued his studies in Berlin (1929–1930), Istanbul (1930–1931)

and Paris (1931). The young scholar returned to Krakow to work as an assistant at the Faculty of East Philology at Jagiellonski University (1931–1932). In 1933, he achieved a position of senior lecturer. He was offered a position as head of the Faculty for Turk languages at the Institute of Oriental Studies, which was established for him at Warsaw University in 1935. He served as a professor head of faculty for the next 37 years. Since 1930, he was a member of the Polish Society of Oriental Studies. During the German occupation of Warsaw (1939–1944), the university was closed. Thus, he worked as an employee of the Statistical Urban Bureau and simultaneously as a teacher of underground courses. After the end of World War II, he was involved in the restoration of Warsaw University. In the years 1946–1950 and 1957–1961, he was director of the Institute of Oriental Studies at Warsaw University. In 1948, Zajączkowski became a member of the Polish Academy of Knowledge in Krakow, and since 1952 a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Subsequently, he was made an honourable doctor of the Universities of Berlin, Tbilisi and Manchester, an honourable member of the Society of the Turkish Language in 1957, a member on the council of a scientific society in Wrocław and a member-correspondent of the Finno-Ugric Society. He also served on a Polish committee workgroup for UNESCO. In 1969, he supervised the Oriental and Iranian Languages Section at the Institute of Oriental Languages ([Zajonchkowskiy](#)).

Professor Zajączkowski gave guest lectures on Oriental, Iranian and Arabic languages and medieval history of the Near East at the Oriental Languages Institute in Moscow (1956), at Jerusalem University (1957), at the Institute of Oriental Languages in Naples (1958) and at Istanbul University (1962). After the Second World War, he visited Crimea, too. He was the author of numerous articles on Khazar, the Kipchak languages and history, and the culture of Turkic-speaking peoples. His major works are dedicated to an analysis of the ethnic structure of the Mamluks, the Khazar Kaganate, the Golden Horde, the migration of Turkic peoples, Osmanian literary monuments and Turkish palaeography. He was also an expert in Arabic and Iranian philology and studied Persian art and literature ([Zajonchkowskiy](#)).

Zajączkowski was an editor of the Karaite periodical *Myśl Karaimska*, later of *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* and the *Karaite-Russian-Polish Dictionary* ([Zajonchkowskiy](#)).

He dedicated a major part of his research to the study of the history, religion and culture of the Karaites. His main work on the topic is *Karaites in Poland* (Warszawa – Paris 1961, in English). It is also necessary to mention his bibliographic sketch *Karaite Literature*, in which he described Karaite books published in Venice in the sixteenth century and in a printing house in Chufut-Kale (since 1830). The scholar also studied the history of the settlement of Crimean Tatars and Karaites in Volyn. Zajączkowski also performed the functions of *hakham* for the Karaite Religious Union in Poland ([Zajonchkowskiy](#)).

#### **The main works on Karaites by A.Zajączkowski :**

- 1) Krótki wykład gramatyki języka zachodniokaraimskiego (1931)

- 2) Studja nad językiem staroosmańskim. Wybrane rozdziały z anatolijskotureckiego przekładu Koranu (1937)
- 3) Problem językowy Chazarów (1946)
- 4) Ze studiów nad zagadnieniem chazarskim (1947)
- 5) Dyplomatyka Złotej Hordy w XV wieku (1948)
- 6) Glosy tureckie w zabytkach staropolskich (1948)
- 7) Związki językowe połowiecko-słowiańskie (1949)
- 8) Liryka Hafiza (1950)
- 9) Charakterystyka Turków w świetle piśmiennictwa arabskiego w średniowieczu (1951)
- 10) Awicenna (1953, redaktor) 11) Studia orientalistyczne z dziejów słownictwa polskiego (1953)
- 12) Słownik arabsko-kipczacki z okresu Państwa Mameluckiego (1954–1958, dwie części)
- 13) Orient jako źródło inspiracji w literaturze romantycznej doby Mickiewiczowskiej (1955)
- 14) Zarys dyplomatyki osmańsko-tureckiej (1955, in the co-authorship with Yan Rakhman)
- 15) Najstarsza wersja turecka «Husräv u Širin» Qutba, cz. 1-3, Warszawa, 1958-1961. 16) Leksyka języków tureckich (1959)
- 17) Mamelucko-kipczacki przekład arabskiego traktatu Muhadimma ‘Abu-l-Lait as-Samarkandi’ (1959)
- 18) Language, Folklore, Science (1961)
- 19) Turecka wersja Šah-nāme z Egiptu Mameluckiego, Warszawa, 1965.
- 20) Sto sentencji i apoftegmatów arabskich Kalifa Ali’ego w parafrazie mamelucko-tureckiej, Warszawa, 1968.

Ananij Zajączkowski was awarded with an Officer's and Commander's a Cross of an award of Revival of Poland (in 1968), with a medal 10th anniversary of Polish National Republic (in 1955), and with Iranian award Nisan-Sipas.

On April 6, 1970, in Italy the scientist died from a heart attack in a car on the way from Rome to Naples. He buried in the Karaite cemetery in Warsaw.

**Source:**

[Zajonchkowskiy](#) Ananiy Akhnezerovich

## **Polish Scholars**

**Adamczuk, Lucjan**



Lucjan Adamczuk was a sociologist who studied at Warsaw University. Between 1984 and 1990, he was director of the Department of Sociology of Culture at the Institute of Culture in Warsaw. From 1990 to 2004, he acted as advisor to the president of the Central Statistical Office for Denominations and Nationalities and organised the Head of the Religious and Nationality Confederacy.

**Czekanowski, Jan (1882–1965):**



(Image Source: [SNPA Glossary](#))

Jan Czekanowski was a Polish anthropologist, ethnologist, statistician and linguist. He was also a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1924) (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* 1979).

Czekanowski was born in Ghichów. He studied at a secondary school in Warsaw and then at a school in Libau (now Liepāja, Latvia). In 1902, he entered the University of Zurich in Switzerland. He studied ethnography, mathematics and anthropology under the supervision of a well-known anthropologist named Rudolph Martin. The young scholar completed his studies at the university in 1906, and received a doctorate in science in 1907. From 1906 to 1910, Czekanowski worked on the staff of the Museum of Ethnology in Berlin. He spent two years, from 1907 to 1909, on a German expedition to Central Africa. He was a curator of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Imperial St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences from 1911 to 1913, then a professor of anthropology at the University of Lwow (L'vov) from 1913 to 1941 (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* 1979).

Czekanowski played an important role in saving the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites from the Holocaust. In 1942, he managed to convince Nazi 'race scientists' that the Karaites are of Turkic origin, although they profess Judaism and use Hebrew as a liturgical language. This helped the Karaite people to escape the tragic destiny of the European Jews (Alekseev 1966).

Between 1945 and 1949, he taught at the Catholic University of Lublin. He became a professor of anthropology in Poznań in 1946 (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* 1979).

Czekanowski's principal works deal with the ethnic composition of the peoples of Europe and Central Africa, the anthropology of Poland and the eastern Baltic regions, an analysis of racial differences and responses to the question of the origin of the Slavs and other Central European peoples. Among his other achievements, he devised a racial classification for the peoples of Europe, one which was not approved by the scientific community though. He also introduced a numerical taxonomy into comparative linguistics, thus founding the discipline of computational linguistics, and he developed (1913) a still much-used index of the similarities between two samples (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* 1979).

J. Czekanowski died on 20 July 1965 in Szczecin (*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia* 1979).

*Czekanowski's main works:*

- Człowiek w czasie i przestrzeni (1934)
- Forschungen in Nil-Kongo–Zwischengebiet, vols. 1–5. Leipzig, 1911–27.
- Polska – Słowiańszczyzna. Perspektywy antropologiczne (1948)
- Zarys metod statystycznych w zastosowaniu do antropologii [An outline of statistical methods applied in anthropology]. Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Warszawskie (1913)
- Wstęp do historii Słowian, 2nd ed. Poznań, 1957.

**Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- M. C.-G. 'Pr. J. Czekanowski' 1965: 2.

**Grzegorzewski, Jan (1850–1922)**

Jan Grzegorzewski was a Polish ethnographer, orientalist, Slavist and writer. He studied the Polish Karaites and produced a number of historical works on the Slavs (*Słownik folkloru polskiego*, 1965).

Jan Grzegorzewski was born in Szulejki, in Volhynia region of Ukraine. He completed secondary school in Żytomierz (Zhytomyr, modern Ukraine). Afterwards, he entered Odessa University, where he majored in Slavic Studies (*Słownik folkloru polskiego*, 1965).

Grzegorzewski lived in Turkey for many years and later moved to the Balkans. In Constantinople and Sofia, he established the Oriental Institute *Hyacinthaeum* in honour of St. Jacek – the first Polish orientalist (*Słownik folkloru polskiego*, 1965).

Around 1914, Grzegorzewski started to publish an annual periodical called *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* (Oriental Annual) in Kraków. In 1919, he published a book called *Na Spiszu*.

*Studia i teksty folklorystyczne* (In Record: Folklore Studies and Texts) in Lwów (*Słownik Folkloru Polskiego*, 1965).

**Source:**

- Słownik folkloru polskiego 1965.

**Kowalski, Tadeusz (1889–1948)**



(Image Source: [Archiwum Nauki](#))

Tadeusz Kowalski was an orientalist, an Arabist, an expert in Iranian culture and languages, and a Turkologist. However, his main area of studies was Turkology. He was a professor at Jagiellonian University and a member of the Polish Academy of Learning (*Polska Akademia Umiejętności*) (1939–1948) (*Biogramy Uczonych Polskich*, 1984).

He was born in France into a Polish family. His family moved back to Poland, so young Tadeusz attended secondary school in Krakow. T. Kowalski studied at the Universities of Vienna, Strasburg and Cologne. He defended his dissertation on the *Culture of Islam* in Vienna and worked as an assistant at the University of Vienna (*Biogramy Uczonych Polskich*, 1984).

In 1914, he received a doctorate from Jagiellonski University and started to work as a docent in the Seminary of Oriental Philology. In 1919, he became a professor and head of the Department of Oriental Philology (Mardkowicz 1931; *Biogramy Uczonych Polskich*, 1984).

At the beginning of World War II, he was arrested and sent to prison as part of the *Sonderaktion Krakau* Nazi operation (targeting the annihilation of the Polish intelligentsia); then he was put into Sachsenhausen prison camp until 1940. Turkish authorities assisted in his release. After World War II, he continued to teach at Jagiellonski University (*Biogramy Uczonych Polskich*, 1984).

*His main works:*

- Ze studiów nad formą poezji ludów tureckich (1921)
- Arabowie i Turcy w świetle źródeł (1923)
- Turcja powojenna (1925)
- W sprawie zapożyczeń tureckich w języku polskim (1928)
- Karaimische Texte im Dialekt von Troki (1929)
- Próba charakterystyki twórczości arabskiej (1933)
- Na szlakach islamu (1935)
- Zagadnienie liczby mnogiej w językach tureckich (1936)
- Próba charakterystyki ludów tureckich (1946)
- Studia nad 'Shah-name' (1952-1953, 2 v.)

**Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- [Tadeusz Kowalski \(1889-1948\) i jego wyprawy naukowe.](#)

*Krakowski Rocznik Archiwalny* VI, 2000.

Tadeusz Kowalski, 1889–1948. 1999.

- Biogramy uczonych polskich 1984.

[Mardkowicz](#) 1931.

**Morelowski, Marian (b. 1884 in Wadowice – d. 1965 in Wrocław)**



(Image Source: [Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe](#)).

Marian Morelowski was a Polish historian of the arts, a pedagogue and a professor.

He entered Jagiellonski University in 1902, and he continued his studies at the University of Wieden in 1905–1906. One year later, he studied in the Sorbonne in Paris and the Collège de France (Zlat 1935).

After he returned to Poland, he taught French in Krakow from 1911 to 1915. Simultaneously, he completed his doctoral studies at the University of Wieden (Zlat 1935).

During World War I, he moved to Russia. In Moscow, he carried out research on the Polish treasures, which had arrived in Russia as trophies during the Tsarist time. He established the Society for the Protection of Polish Treasures in Russia. At the end of World War I, the Soviet Union decided to return the Polish treasures; Morelowski was a consultant for the vindictory commission. He remained in the Soviet Union until 1926 and studied the tapestries of Wawel Castle (Zlat 1935).

Between 1926 and 1929, Marelowski was the custodian of the State Art Collection at Wawel. During the same period, he published many scholarly articles (Zlat 1935).

In 1930, he moved to Wilna, where he worked as a professor's assistant. In 1934, he became associate professor at the Department of History of Arts at the University of Wilna. The subject of his scientific research during that period was Baroque architecture in Wilna. He remained in Wilna during the Second World War, teaching secretly. After the war, he taught at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), and in 1947 he lectured at the University of Wroclaw. He moved permanently to Wroclaw in 1949, and in 1953 he became an associate professor and chairman of the Department of Art History at the University of Wroclaw. Morelowski retired in 1960, but for the next two years he gave guest lectures for students. The subject of his scientific research was the medieval art of lower Silesia ([Professor Marian Morelowski](#)).

Marelowski was buried in Krakow ([Professor Marian Morelowski](#)).

### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Bohdziewicz 1964.
- Orosz 1964.
- [Profesor Marian Morelowski](#).

### **Talko-Hryncewicz, Julian (1850–1936)**



(Image Source: [Infpol](#))

Julian Talko-Hryncewicz was a Polish anthropologist, doctor and ethnographer. He was one of the founders of Polish anthropology, an amateur archaeologist and a specialist on Siberia. He was a professor in the Department of Physical Anthropology at Jagiellonski University (Wasiliew 2003).

Talko-Hryncewicz was born to a noble Polish family in Rukszany, in the Kowno region of Lithuania (then a part of the Russian Empire). After the uprising of 1863–1864, Russian authorities confiscated the family estate. He started his education in Kowno, but because of the strengthened anti-Polish politics, he moved to St. Petersburg with his uncle in 1869 and completed secondary school there. He completed his studies in medicine in Kiev in 1876. He started to work as a doctor in Zvenigorodka, in Ukraine, but then decided to continue his education abroad and travelled around Europe studying medicine. In Paris, he studied under Paul Broca, who helped establish the modern field of anthropology. His anthropology studies in Paris greatly influenced his further scholarly activities (Wasiliew 2003; Yan 2010).

Talko-Hryncewicz returned to Zvenigorodka, where he continued working as a doctor and started to publish articles on medicine. He participated in archaeological excavations of the Scythian burial mounds in the Zvenigorod region and started conducting his own anthropological research activities. In 1900, he had to leave Zvenigorod because of debts resulting from the death of his Polish relatives. At that time, he travelled and studied the so-called Kresy borderlands, which included the former east provinces of Poland, modern western Ukraine, western Belarus and eastern Lithuania, and the peoples living there. As part of his research, he studied Ukrainians, Polesians, Lithuanians, Karaites and other peoples living in Kresy (Wasiliew 2003; Yan 2010).

In 1891, Talko-Hryncewicz moved to Siberia to work as a doctor in Troitskosavsk (Kyahta), in Transbaikalia. The region interested him from an anthropological research point of view. There he studied Buryats and other local peoples and established a local museum in Kyahta (Wasiliew 2003; Yan 2010).

Russian scholarly circles viewed Talko-Hryniewicz's research favourably. The Imperial Russian Geographical Society awarded him a large golden medal in St. Petersburg in 1894 (Wasiliew 2003; Yan 2010).

In 1908, after 16 years of being abroad, the scholar returned to Poland to teach at Jagiellonski University and to continue his research (Wasiliew 2003).

#### **Other Sources and Further Reading:**

- Eylbart 2003.Mitylova 1999.
- [Sibirskie Kurgany I Yulian Tal'ko-Gryntsevich](#)
- Wasiliew 2003.
- Yan 2010.

### **Other European Scholars**

#### **Gini, Corrado (1884–1965)**



(Image Source: [Metronjournal](#))

Gini Corrado was born in 1884 in Motta di Livenza, near Treviso (Italy), into a family of landowners ([Forcina & Giorgi 2005](#); [Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

He completed his degree at the University of Bologna in 1905, where he studied in the Faculty of Law. Besides law, statistics and economics, he studied mathematics and biology. These studies formed a good basis for his two main fields of scientific interest: the social sciences and statistics ([Forcina & Giorgi 2005](#); [Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

Gini studied Bernoulli, Lexis and Czuber as well as the masters of Italian statistics, Bodio, Messedaglia and Benini. Thus, he acquired profound knowledge on the subject. In 1910, he attained the Chair of Statistics at the University of Cagliari. During this period, until the end of the First World War, he made important contributions to the field of statistical science, which he enriched by introducing many new techniques of measurement ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

Gini founded the international statistic journal *METRON* in 1920, and directed it until his death. During and after the First World War, he became interested in the social and economic problems of war and reconstruction, such as war losses, raw material supplies, national wealth and income, economic depression and inflation. Gini became an adviser to the Italian government and a League of Nations expert. Between 1917 and 1925, he was a member of numerous Italian and international committees dealing with such problems as raw material supplies, the measurement of income and wealth in member states of the League of Nations, labour, child care, the settlement of war debts, and so forth. At the same time, Gini continued his scholarly work. In 1913, he took over the Chair of Statistics at the University of Padua. In 1919, he received the Royal Prize for Social Sciences from the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. By that time, he was lecturing at the Universities of Cagliari and Padua on political economy, constitutional law, demography and economic statistics. In 1911, he became a member of the *Consiglio Superiore di Statistica* ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

In 1923, he moved to the University of Rome, where he developed a lecture course in sociology. He continued teaching it until his retirement. He founded the School of Statistics in 1928 to train statistical personnel for public office, and in 1936 he founded the Faculty of Statistical, Demographic and Actuarial Sciences ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

In 1929, Gini established the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems (*Comitato italiano per lo studio dei problemi della popolazione*), resulting in the organisation of the first Population of Congress in Rome two years later. This was followed after the Second World War by a series of international population congresses under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. The committee survived all the post-war difficulties thanks to the extraordinary interest aroused by its work and its high quality of work. Gini's main achievements are the publication of a series of volumes of source material, *Fonti Archivistiche per lo studio dei problemi della popolazione fino al 1943*, and scientific expeditions for the study of isolated population groups, which Gini, as president, organised and directed. Today, the committee's official journal is still called *Genus*, which Gini founded in 1934 ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

Gini also founded the journal *La Vita Economica Italiana* in 1926, which recorded current economic developments until the war, but it ended publication in 1943. Corrado Gini was elected to membership in a large number of scientific academies in Italy and abroad and he taught and lectured at many of the major universities in Europe as well in the United States, Japan, India and



Latin America. Honorary degrees were conferred upon him in economics by the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan (1932), in sociology by the University of Geneva (1934), in sciences by Harvard University (1936) and in social sciences by the University of Cordoba, in Argentina (1963) ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

Gini enjoyed numerous other achievements. In 1933, Gini was elected vice president of the International Sociological Institute; in 1934 president of the Italian Genetics and Eugenics Society; in 1935 president of the International Federation of Eugenics Societies in Latin-language Countries; in 1937 president of the Italian Sociological Society; and in 1941 president of the Italian Statistical Society. In 1957, he received the Gold Medal for outstanding service to the Italian School and in 1962 he was elected National Member of the Accademia dei Lincei ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

Gini was one of the most distinguished and also one of the most active members of the International Statistical Institute; he became an honorary member of it in 1939 ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

Corrado Gini died in March 1965 ([Biography of Corrado Gini](#)).

#### **Sources and further reading:**

- [Forcina & Giorgi](#) 2005
- [Biography of Corrado Gini](#).

#### **Harviainen, Tapani (b. 1 February 1944, Kuopio)**

Tapani Harviainen is a Finnish scholar and specialist in Semitic languages: Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew. Harviainen speaks various languages, including Finnish, Swedish, English and German. He also reads Polish and Russian.

In 1970, T. Harviainen graduated with a Master of Arts from the University of Helsinki and began work as a lecturer. In 1977, he received a doctorate in Semitic languages and became a docent in Semitic languages.

From 1985 to 2009, he was a professor of Semitic languages and cultures at the University of Helsinki. In 2009, he continues to work as a part-time lecturer in the university, dedicating all his free time to research.

Another of Harviainen's areas of specialisation is the Polish and Lithuanian Karaites and the study of their Hebrew pronunciation. He has also written a number of articles on the history of the Karaites, defending their Semitic cultural heritage with the right to be identified as a Turkic people (See T. Harviainen's articles in the References).

**Source:**

- T. Harviainen's academic profile see at [TUHAT](#)

## **Israeli scholars**

### **Kizilov, Mikhail [Кизилов, Михаил] (b. 24 July 1974, Simferopol)**

Dr Mikhail Kizilov is a scholarly fellow at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beer Sheva, Israel.

He was born in Simferopol, Ukraine, and educated as a historian in Simferopol, Poland and Budapest. In Kizilov's own words, he started his voyage into academic Jewish studies by attending numerous summer and winter schools and conferences organised by *Sefer* (Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilisation), followed by one year of study in Yarnton (Oxford). As he said, he has participated in *Sefer*'s programs as a 'jack of all trades' – as a student, as a lecturer, as a speaker, as a head of conference sessions and as an *Eshnav* programme participant (a training programme for young scholars in Israel). Though he received his PhD in 2007 from Oxford, he says that his academic identity has been formed due to the contacts, knowledge and experience gained through the years of close amity with *Sefer* – its staff and teachers.

Kizilov speaks Russian, Ukrainian, Polish and Hebrew. He reads German, Karaite, French and Italian.

Mikhail Kizilov has more than 60 publications on Karaite, Crimean, Khazar, and Jewish history in the English, Russian, German, and Hebrew languages, including *The Karaites Through the Travelers' Eyes* (New York, 2003) and *The Karaites of Galicia: An Ethnoreligious Minority Among the Ashkenazim, the Turks, and the Slavs, 1772–1945* (Oxford, 2008), *Bibliographia Karaitica* (Brill, 2010).

(See M. Kizilov's articles in the References).

### **Shapira, Dan (b. 1 March 1961, Moscow)**



(Image Source: [Izrus](#))

Dan Shapira is an Israeli linguist of Russian origin. He is a professor of Middle Eastern studies at Bar Ilan University. He was born in Moscow. He took great interest in linguistics from an early age. When he graduated from school, he knew Russian, Hebrew, Yiddish and several Turkic languages and had begun learning Persian and Arabic ([Shapira Dan. Interview 2008](#)).

Shapira had wanted to enter the prestigious Institute of Asian and African Studies in Moscow, but was refused admittance because his Jewish surname was 'too oriental'. Thus, he entered the Institute of Foreign Languages of Maurice Thorez and studied linguistics and Germanistica. As an external student, he studied Hittite, Sanskrit and Chinese at Moscow State University. He also studied languages on his own, and from the age of 17 he taught Hebrew and some Arabic at underground Jewish cultural organisations, which were widespread at that time in Moscow ([Shapira Dan. Interview 2008](#), [Dan Shapira 2004](#)).

In 1987, Shapira immigrated to Israel and graduated from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1987–1997) with a specialisation in Old Semitic languages and Iranistics. He received a doctorate in Studies of Holy Texts of Persian Zoroastrianism ([Shapira Dan. Interview 2008](#)).

Professor Shapira can read more than 50 languages, including Chinese, Pashto and Urdu. He speaks fluent Russian, Hebrew, German, Persian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Polish and four dialects of Arabic ([Shapira Dan. Interview 2008](#), [Dan Shapira. Interview 2004](#)).

He has also studied the Karaite Turkic language and published a number of articles on the Karaite language and history. He considers the Karaite language to be a Kuman-Kipchak dialect, fiercely defends the Karaite Jewish ethnic origin and firmly attacks articles and authors that claim a Turkic identity for the Karaites ([Dan Shapira. Interview 2004](#); [Shapira Dan. Interview 2008](#)).

(See D. Shapira's articles in *References*).

#### **Sources:**

- [Dan Shapira. Interview 2004](#).
- [Shapira Dan. Interview 2008](#).

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